



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

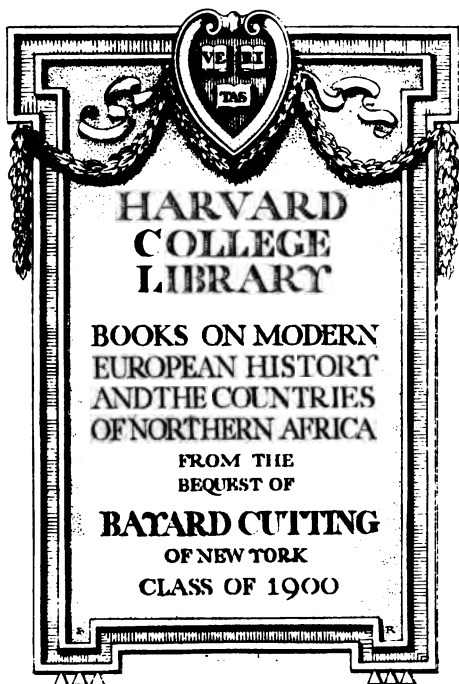
- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

3 2044 010 161 446

5085.9



SISTERS OF CHARITY

AND

THE COMMUNION OF LABOUR.



~~500586.9~~
Mr. Inspector
from
SISTERS OF CHARITY

AND

THE COMMUNION OF LABOUR.

TWO LECTURES ON THE SOCIAL EMPLOYMENTS OF WOMEN.

BY MRS. JAMESON.

A NEW EDITION.

ENLARGED AND IMPROVED

WITH A PREFATORY LETTER TO

THE RIGHT HON. LORD JOHN RUSSELL

PRESIDENT OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE PROMOTION OF SOCIAL SCIENCE

ON THE PRESENT CONDITION AND REQUIREMENTS OF
THE WOMEN OF ENGLAND.

LONDON

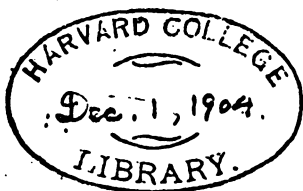
LONGMAN, BROWN, GREEN, LONGMANS, AND ROBERTS.

1859

2/4 Price 7s

~~Soc 5085.9~~

Soc 5085.9



Gratis.

CONTENTS.

| | Page |
|--|--------|
| LETTER TO LORD JOHN RUSSELL ON THE PRESENT CONDITION AND REQUIREMENTS OF THE WOMEN OF ENGLAND | ix |
| Men and Women—their equal but distinct Claims and Capacities | xi |
| Recent Changes in the Law | xii |
| Appeals to Public Opinion | xiii |
| The Hour and the Conflict | xv |
| Industrial Antagonism | xvi |
| Moral Antagonism | xix |
| Social Separation | xxi |
| Satires on Women | xxiv |
| The Social Minotaur | xxvii |
| What Englishwomen require | xxix |
| Female Administration in Female Prisons | xxxi |
| Different Treatment of Male and Female Convicts | xxxiii |
| Hospitals for Women and Children | xxxv |
| Workhouses | xxxvii |
| Professional Training of Women | xli |
| State of Education and Criminal Statistics | xlii |
| Art Education — Royal Academy | xliii |
| Women as Medical Practitioners | xlvi |
| Moral Training of Schoolboys | xlix |
| Moral Sanitary Reform | l |
| Conclusion | lii |

SISTERS OF CHARITY: A LECTURE.

| | |
|---|----|
| Introduction | 3 |
| Work for Women | 13 |
| Female Religious Communities in ancient times | 19 |
| The Hospital of S. Maria Nuova at Florence | 22 |
| The Sisters of Charity of S. Vincent de Paul | 29 |

| | |
|---|---------|
| Protestant Sisters of Charity | Page 34 |
| The Deaconesses | 37 |
| Refuges for Fallen Women | 38 |
| Work at Home | 40 |
| The Female Nurses in the East | 54 |
| Moral Effects of Female Influence | 58 |

THE COMMUNION OF LABOUR : A LECTURE.

| | |
|--|-----|
| Influence of Legislation on the Morals and Happiness of Men and Women | 71 |
| Communion of Labour in Sanitary, Educational, Re- formatory, and Penal Institutions | 80 |
| Hospitals | 82 |
| Hospitals under Female Management at Paris, at Milan, at Turin, at Siena | 85 |
| Prisons | 96 |
| Reformatory Schools | 102 |
| Penitentiaries | 104 |
| Workhouses | 110 |
| Education and Training of Women for Social Employ- ments | 126 |
| Working for Hire and Working for Love | 135 |
| Religious Difficulties | 138 |
| Dress and Discipline | 144 |
| Conclusion | 146 |

LETTER
TO
LORD JOHN RUSSELL.

"Every one must have observed the new influence, which is not being asserted or sought, but is falling to the lot of women, in swaying the destinies of the world. It is not a share in directing the patronage of ministers or guiding the councils of kings, as in former times, but a portion in the formation and the moulding of public opinion. For a great part of our periodical literature,—for much of that world of fiction in which many live and nearly all take delight,—we are indebted to the ethereal fancy, the delicate perception, and the grace of expression possessed by women. It seems to me—and I am confirmed in this opinion by the bright examples of heroic benevolence—that if the young generation are to be an improvement on their fathers, if sin is to have less dominion and religion more power, if vice is to be abashed and virtue to be honoured, it is to Woman we must look for such a generation."

*Opening Address, by LORD JOHN RUSSELL, at the Second Annual Meeting
of the Association for the Promotion of Social Science, 1858.*

A LETTER
TO
LORD JOHN RUSSELL.

MY LORD,

It was the remark of some very clever man, whose name at this moment I forget (Addison, I think), that "whenever any satirical exposition is made of the weakness, inconsistency, or vices of men in a general way, every individual man does not therefore feel himself aggrieved, nor called upon to take up the cudgels in defence of his sex; whereas when women are libelled or disparaged, every woman is up in arms, and considers the attack on her sex as a personal affront." This is true; and the reason—at least *one* reason—is, that when women are derided and satirised, the satire invariably comes from men whose praise or blame women feel intensely, led thereto by a natural instinct and by the whole tendency of their training and education. And if women were to write satires against men (which Heaven forbid!), would not every individual man feel insulted and aggrieved, and called upon to express his disgust and his dissent? The result in both cases arises from the intuitive value which men and women set on each other's good opinion; one of those great natural laws which I believe to have been ordained by Almighty wisdom for the moral elevation of both sexes through mutual attraction and mutual influence well and wisely understood. It will

be a last and fatal step in moral and social degradation when Man cares nothing for the contempt of Woman, or when Woman holds in light regard the disapprobation of Man! Hence also is the converse true; and when a distinguished man publicly addresses kind and reasonable words of praise and encouragement to women generally, — not as mere phrases of deferential compliment, but in just acknowledgment of the efforts made to accomplish higher destinies for themselves, and aid in the great cause of human progress,—then every woman is lifted up in heart, is comforted by new motives for hope and self-respect: and therefore I may be allowed, without subjecting myself to the reproach of vanity or presumption, to thank Lord John Russell for words of his spoken at the last meeting of the Association for the Promotion of Social Science. I had not the pleasure of hearing those words, but they stand recorded in his opening address on that occasion. My Lord, we women are accustomed to be toasted at convivial and philanthropic banquets, when the glass "to the ladies" introduces the appropriate glee, and to be apostrophised in charity sermons, when the text from St. Paul introduces the appeal to our sympathy or our purses; but to be specially addressed at a grave, secular, and philosophical meeting, sitting side by side with earnest and intelligent men, intent on matters of the deepest public interest, — to be specially recognised as not only having sympathy with them in their aims for public good, but some admitted share as associated workers in the means by which such objects are to be attained,—this is a recent innovation, and one which every individual woman now working and striving in this world of care fully appreciates.* It sounds fine to merge distinctions of sex in general high-sounding

* I remember that the first time I heard women publicly addressed as members of the community, and co-operating in social objects, was in a speech from Lord Robert Cecil.

phrases; to speak of the "claims of mankind at large"—the progress of humanity—"the destinies of the world"—the "great human brotherhood"—as is the manner of philosophers and philanthropists; but it means something more real, more vital, more heart-felt and home-felt, when we speak of "men" and of "women"—not to disunite them—not implying thereby any separation of those divine and earthly interests held in common, and through which they form in the aggregate the great social community, but to bring them before us with their *equal* but still *distinct* humanity; their *equal* but still *distinct* need of divine and earthly justice and mercy; their *equal* but still *distinct* capacities and responsibilities in the great social commonwealth.

This argument of the distinct claims of the two sexes, without mutual discord, of their necessary communion in all social work without disturbance of the natural domestic relations, I have endeavoured to illustrate in the two Lectures (or Essays) which follow. They were first published in 1855 and 1856. The degree of attention they excited at the time, was owing, I believe, partly to the novelty of some of the views suggested, and yet more to the coincidence of some public events, which gave to these views a more direct application—a more immediate interest. When two editions were soon exhausted, I did not think of republishing them, because, as it appeared to me, they had accomplished their object as far as anything so imperfect could do so. Lately, however, many of the subjects touched upon—happily no longer *new*—have assumed a new degree of importance. The progress of opinion has indeed been so rapid, even within the last three or four years, that many suggestions, which in these pages were put forth hesitatingly because in opposition to established prejudices, are no longer in danger of being overborne by such prejudices; the

tide of public feeling is flowing with them, not against them; and many facts, then strange and startling, have become familiar to the public mind,—their result a part of the public creed. It has been represented to me, that a new edition might at this time do good, and give encouragement to many doubting and struggling spirits, by showing that certain questions and certain objections have, to a certain extent, been anticipated and answered; and it is because of the candid and generous feeling evinced by yourself, my Lord, by Lord Brougham (who alluded especially to these Essays), by Lord Shaftesbury, Lord Carlisle, and others, that I venture to place this new edition under the auspices of the Society for the Promotion of Social Science; while to your Lordship, as PRESIDENT, I presume to address some prefatory observations on the present condition and requirements of the women of England.

It is true, that since these Lectures were first published, the progress of opinion in all things that concern us is more than satisfactory. The legislature of this country has granted two measures of justice to women, the protection of her property, and a revision of the conjugal and divorce laws. Every woman,—at least every refined and thoughtful woman,—knows that on the sanctity and permanence of the marriage bond depends the dignity and happiness of woman; but we also know how terrible it is to be left without any possibility of honourable redress for dishonourable wrong. There is yet room for amendment in regard to the machinery by which these recent enactments are carried out, which indeed is so imperfect and unpractical that it is as if our Government and our courts of justice had conspired together to render them nugatory; but the principle has been admitted, and is working well. If I have, notwithstanding, left my observations on the former state of the law, and on the

manner in which it has acted on the moral relations of the two sexes, to stand as first written, it is because these remarks are applicable at this present moment to the social consequences of these laws, as well as to some other prejudices which, though disowned as motives of action, in their effects still prevail. A great system of moral and legal wrong leaves its traces in society long after it has been abolished both by law and custom, and its evil results are eradicated only by slow degrees. On the whole, it may be said, in reference to these legal changes, that the immediate practical alleviation of certain hardships in individual cases is the least of the benefits conferred. The discussions which attended these measures, in and out of Parliament, often gave exquisite pain to refined and sensitive women; made some of us almost wish to go on enduring anything—everything—rather than that such discussions should take place; but the pain is past and the good remains. Through the various facts and arguments brought forward by sensible men on both sides, light was let in on dark places; evils which had never yet found expression were dragged out of unclean holes and shaken and ventilated. A more healthy, a more hopeful tone has since pervaded public opinion; and not women only, but the whole social community has been the better for these discussions.

"No injured wives or suffering children are ever benefited by an appeal to the public,"—such is the fiat recently pronounced by an influential periodical. The absolute tone of this assertion, as if it were some indisputable truth, strikes into silent acquiescence a timid unreflecting mind: but is it true? Your Lordship's long experience as a statesman must have proved to you that it is altogether false. It may be true as regards individual cases. Too certainly an injured wife, who has suffered all she can be made to suffer, is not restored to happiness by "an appeal to the public."

The wretched child, who has been sacrificed in body and soul by the mistakes and neglects of society, is not made good, healthy, or happy, by "an appeal to the public." Public sympathy in the one case, public indignation in the other, cannot heal, cannot recall the past: but is it not to the awakening of the "public" conscience by reiterated appeals against such individual cases of irreparable wrong, that we owe the protection of many women, the salvation of many children? With regard to other subjects just touched upon in the following Essays, we are not *now* called upon to demonstrate that such and such objects are right or desirable. How they shall best be carried out is now the question. It has been proved by experience, that where men have tried to accomplish some well-considered, carefully planned philanthropic purpose, they have, in the long run, fallen into confusion, and found themselves stumbling, as it were, blindfold, amid ill-understood, half-acknowledged obstacles and difficulties:—and that where women have set about organising on their part some united action for certain very laudable purposes, they fall to pieces like bricks without cement. But when men and women, who together constitute the true social public, come to an agreement in any object, and heartily work together, it is then no partial, divided undertaking; it works its way surely from theory into practice, and does not fall back into a chaos of confusion and disappointment. Some of our public institutions remind one of those unhappy ships which are to be seen, I am told, in our great dockyards, constructed on no ascertained requirement or principle; then taken to pieces, remodelled, remade, patched, new-engined, new-named; rotten before they are launched, or leaky when launched. "Sails or engines?" that *was* the question;—and now we find that if the vessel is to stem safely both winds and waves, that we cannot do without both sails and engines,—sails to catch the favouring winds

of heaven, and engines to force a way through the opposing waters. So if men and women are united in combining and working any great social machinery, it will then work well.* These principles, my Lord, based on natural and immutable laws, were perhaps disputed yesterday, are faintly recognised to-day, but will become the common faith of to-morrow. Therefore with regard to this "woman question"—so called—as I have no misgivings, so I have no desire to precipitate the inevitable; no wish to hurry, and by hurrying perplex or defeat for a time that matured and practical result to which we all look forward. For myself, I have a deep-seated solemn conviction that the great social want of our time is a more perfect domestic union, and a more complete social communion of men and women; and that this want, more and more felt through the thinking brain and throbbing heart of the people, will, in God's good time, be fulfilled by natural means, and work to natural issues of good and happiness beyond our present imagining.

But these, it will be said, are visions of a yet distant future. Let us return, then, to the present. This hour and its conflict belong to us. Let us, like Jacob at Peniel, "hold the fleet angel fast," until, after the strife and the struggle, he leave us at dawn of day unvanquished and with a blessing.

THIS HOUR AND ITS CONFLICT; for, my Lord, however we may deprecate the idea, it cannot be denied that we

* In one of our Girls' Colleges, under high patronage and managed by a joint committee of Ladies and Gentlemen, nearly the whole of the Ladies' Committee (sixteen out of twenty-four) resigned at once, because they differed with the Gentlemen's Committee on some point of importance. "See there!" it was said to me, "the result of your 'Communion of Labour'!" After the resignation of these ladies and the election of others, they were found to be in the right. The points at issue were conceded. So the result of this "Communion," though disturbed, will be on the whole good. There will be in future less dogmatism on the part of the men, and less haste and susceptibility on the part of the women, and a better understanding between both.

are in the midst of a moral and social conflict, which is disturbing the deepest elements of our moral and social life, and compared to which all political and national conflicts are superficial and transient. One half of the human community, without any perceptibly organised movement, and only urged by an acute sense of individual suffering—individual necessity—presses forward, striving, not vainly, for a more equal distribution of labour and its privileges. The other half resist. Men say to us, "You women will perhaps gain such and such advantages, but you will be the worse for it. You will awaken in men a spirit of antagonism instead of a spirit of protection." And then, anon, with a sort of cruel inconsistency, they say, "If women would have such or such advantages, they must obtain them for themselves. They must do for themselves what men certainly will not do for them. They must not look for help from men whose protection they have thrown off."

Now with regard to the "spirit of antagonism" with which we are threatened, does it allude to the jealousy caused by industrial competition? Antagonism to woman on the part of any individual man is allowed to be unmanly, and no man confesses to any such feeling; but it has always existed—it does still exist in every associated body of men who have to consult, decide, act, legislate, where women are concerned. It is not therefore an evil to be threatened or apprehended, but one to be shaken off. It has done its worst, this old-world, unchristian spirit of antagonism; but of the mischief which is past we are reaping the consequences in the mischief of the present.

My Lord, as a statesman, watchful of the signs of the times, you must be well aware that women have lately been employed in various occupations hitherto confined to men. All enlightened men rejoice in this as forming a counterpoise to many threatening evils; and yet the first attempt

of women to enter on a new sphere of industry is invariably met by any associated body of men, whose privileges or whose gains appear to be threatened, in a spirit of the most angry antagonism. The immediate feeling is not to welcome us as helpers and associates, but to put us down as rivals and interlopers; and this spirit is not confined to gangs and unions of vulgar uneducated artisans, or boards of jealous poor-law guardians: it is to be found in Royal Academies of art and Royal Colleges of physicians. Thus driven out of the natural communion of labour, we are solemnly warned against the loss of "protection" which must ensue if we dare to make a stand for ourselves. A woman so naturally clings to the protection of man, that until that protection be in some way withdrawn or unattainable, she never *does* "set up for herself" as the phrase is. If, on the other hand, she is exposed to want, and has cultivated talents which enable her to earn a maintenance, why must she, therefore, be supposed to forego willingly that sense of moral support and solace which only the man can give to the woman, and which are far more to her than her daily bread? This is a strange mistake, a strange confounding of the most opposite things. Do men suppose that our love, honour, and obedience depend on the quantity of food they put into our mouths? How degrading to their manly dignity, how unworthy of all womanly feeling is such an idea! But in fact this spirit of industrial antagonism arises from the fear that an influx of female labour will swamp the labour-market and diminish their own gains. It would be superfluous to add one word to what has been said against this unmanly and short-sighted call for "protection" on the part of the stronger sex against the weaker, and I shall say nothing here about the industrial callings of the working women, because in a country where two millions of women *must* labour for their bread, a material and inevitable necessity *must* bring this question to its

natural solution. "Commerce and agriculture are the man's sphere; preparing the food and raiment, the woman's sphere:" such, at least, is said to be the *natural* division of labour; yet we do not find women conspiring against man-cooks, man-milliners, or man-midwives, for "taking the bread out of our mouths," as gangs of china-painters, watchmakers, and compositors have conspired against women.*

As to protection extended to the working women, they ought to need no other than that of equal laws. I have already alluded to those recent and humane enactments by which women are henceforth to be protected against the dreadful abuse of physical strength in the lower orders of society, and against a not less terrible abuse of particular social rights in the higher classes.† So far men have given us legal protection against themselves; but then there is another sort of protection which we are supposed to need and to be grateful to men for extending to us. It is assumed that every man must and does protect his own wife, sister, daughter, from other men. In certain cases, if it be in the power of the strong to destroy the weak, it is taken for granted that he will. But can man, the "woman's natural protector," always protect even the dear one who sits by his hearth? Has he always respected the protection of his own roof so far as his dependants are concerned? Does he think of extending this protection to the wife, the daughter, the sister of his neighbour? Not in the least. It is not, therefore, in right of her womanhood, but as a part of the property of a man—"cosa sua"—that a woman is protected. I do not see,

* See "*The Industrial and Social Position of Women of the Middle and Lower Ranks*:" written, I believe, by an accomplished barrister; and the first article in the *Edinburgh Review* for April 1855. This last is especially a sign of the times: four or five years ago, such an article would not have been accepted by the editor.

† Vide "*The Communion of Labour*," p. 74.

therefore, that we have much reason to regard this threat of losing the man's protection.

Then, as to the second proposition, that "women must help themselves, for men will not help them;" this may well make us pause. In the first place, we cannot gain for ourselves what we require in the way of better laws (needed still), better means of education, and a better training for that larger sphere of social work to which women are called by appeals from the pulpit, the platform, the public press, and by the acknowledged necessities of the time. To make these appeals, to expatiate on these necessities, yet demur to give us the means of preparing ourselves for the work to which we are called—this is not just. "Go make brick, but we will not give you straw; go find it for yourselves!" But we cannot! We are so bound up in you men,—you have been so long our legislators, our pastors, and our masters, that we must receive it from your hands, or despair. Women may honestly and perseveringly strive and work, but unless they win the help and the sympathy of good men, and succeed in convincing the reason of intelligent men, vain are all their efforts. But men *do* help us. It has been proved by the recent changes in our laws that we do find able, generous defenders; and when we hear such men,—men who have placed themselves in the van of social improvement, distinguished by intellect, by high station, by long experience of life and its vicissitudes, when we hear such men speaking publicly words of hope,—then, indeed, we may believe that the cause I have pleaded in the following Essays will no longer be called the "woman-question," but the "human-question," as concerning not merely one half of the community at this present time, but all humanity to all time. Neither the march of intellect, nor reform of Parliament—if I may say so to Lord John Russell—nor new churches with extra services, and zealous bishops to pray for us and preach to us, not these, nor any other specifics,

will avail, unless we set our house in order, and place on purer, more truthful, more Christian-like basis, the sacred relations of domestic life. Therefore, my Lord, this it is which women chiefly require. If domestic life be their "proper sphere," they have some claim to be listened to when they point out those anomalies which are felt within the limits of the home; those needs which enlarge the family relations; those progressive changes in the material conditions of our national existence which are tending to make "woman's sphere," as well as "man's sphere," much larger and more complicated system of duties than was contemplated in the days when "Adam delved and Eve span:" only let it be perfectly understood with regard to women, as well as with regard to men, that the necessity of enlarging the merely personal into the social relations, does not imply the substituting one set of duties for any other set of duties, but the enlargement of the whole sphere of duty.

But before I enter on the "woman's sphere" (much abused phrase!), permit me to bring to your Lordship's notice one dangerous misapprehension, because I find that it has lately caused disturbance in many weak minds, and even in one or two strong ones; and that, in spite of its absurdity, it is gaining ground by frequent iteration. I have been said in a popular, well-written review that women consider themselves, and desire to be considered, as a separate class in the community, with separate interests, pursuits, and aims, from those of men. We are reproached at once with a desire to assimilate ourselves to men, and a desire to separate ourselves from men; and we are solemnly warned against the social evils and moral perils of such an assumption to ourselves and to the community at large.

My Lord, I deny absolutely, on the part of my countrywomen, any such desire, any such assumption. No more fatal, more unjust misconception could prevail, with regard

to the views and feelings entertained by intelligent English-women on their own condition and requirements. On the contrary, it is the desire and ambition of women to be considered in all the relations, all the conditions of life, domestic and social, as the *helpmate*. We pray not to be separated from men, but to be allowed to be nearer to them; to be considered not merely as the appendage and garnish of man's outward existence, but as a part of his *life*, and all that is implied in the real sense of the word. We see the strong necessity in many cases, yet we do regret that the avocations of men accustom them to dispense with much of our sympathy and society, and that thus a great number of women are thrown upon their own resources, mental and social. Every circle of men from which women are excluded supposes a certain number of women separated from them. I do not find that this state of things has, hitherto, made men uncomfortable. *Now*, however, they seem, all at once, to be struck with it as an anomalous state, and I am glad of it; but surely it is not to be imputed to women as a fault or as an assumption. I saw the effects of this kind of social separation of the sexes when I was in America. I thought it did not act well on the happiness or the manners of either. The men too often became coarse and material as clay in private life, and in public life too prone to cudgels and revolvers; and the effect of the women herding so much together was not to refine them, but the contrary; to throw them into various absurd and unfeminine exaggerations. This at least was my impression. I confine my observations as much as possible to our own time and country, else I might enlarge on these influences, and show that in Italy, as in America, the separation of the two sexes, arising from quite different causes, is producing even worse results. It struck me in Italy that the absence of all true sympathy, a sort of disdain felt by the men for the women

as the mere amusement of an idle hour, might be fatal to the spirit of liberty. The women, ill educated, thrown on the priests for sympathy, consideration, and companionship, were distrusted and condemned by the liberal party. The men could not live without the *love* of women—it is rather an abuse of the sentiment so to speak—but they aimed to live without the social “comforts locked up in woman’s love,” without the sympathy, esteem, or approbation of women. Of the deep taint of corruption, the gross materialism, the discord between scepticism and the most ignorant superstition, and other even worse results, I forbear to say more in this place. I thought, when I was in Italy, that it might be difficult to establish political liberty on such a rotten basis; but it is fair to add that accomplished Italians, while admitting the whole extent of this social mischief, attributed it to the anomalous state of their political and religious institutions. I write this while rumours of war are around us, and while the deepest sympathies of my nature are roused in the cause of the Italian people; but not the less do I feel that, let the issue be what it may, they cannot build up a permanent national and political existence except on a healthier social basis. I am speaking only of the general impressions I brought away from America and from Italy, and do not presume to judge either country, only I should be sorry to see the same causes prevail and produce the same effects in this England of ours. The best safeguard against ruffianism, as against profligacy, lies in the true relation between men and women. There are professions which necessarily divide us from men during some hours of the day. Lawyers, government officers, merchants, soldiers, sailors, even when they are married and have homes, spend much of their time out of them. They should be careful that it is not *too* much. Why should this separation be carried farther than is inevitable? Why

do clubs, academies, charitable boards, literary and scientific societies so tenaciously exclude women, except when tolerated as an occasional and merely ornamental element? Men may say — they *do* say — “What prevents you women from having charitable, literary, scientific societies and academies of your own?” But this is precisely the state of things which every wise man, every feeling woman, will deprecate. If, where no law of expediency or necessity require it, men studiously separate themselves from us and then reproach us that we form, in mere self-defence, some resources for ourselves, what can ensue but the moral deterioration of both? Let not woman be driven to this: we do not seek it, nor does it rest with us to avoid it.

I have endeavoured in these Essays to point out some of those influences which are tending to that “separation” against which we are warned. I am glad to find that the too early and complete division between boys and girls in training and education is beginning to excite attention in England, as a possible cause of much moral evil; and how often I have heard able and distinguished men lament the want of refined accessible female society in our Universities, and stigmatise it as a remnant of those monastic ordinances which prevailed at their foundation! But, then, is not the same true with regard to young lawyers, young artists, and young medical men when they first enter on their professional life? and who can doubt that this is a state of things fraught with mischief and misunderstanding in the subsequent family relations? Who can wonder that when men and women are united in marriage and in the government of the home, there is a want of comprehension of each other’s motives, a want of respect for each other’s independence, fatal to domestic peace?

Young men grow up from their school and college days in total ignorance of the true condition of woman, and the education which has been given to her. With a love

tender, reverent, and protective towards a good mother, with an affectionate yet somewhat exacting and patronising feeling towards a good sister (if they are so happy as to have either one or the other), — as regards women generally, they enter on manhood and its duties with a total inability to understand, or rather an inclination to misunderstand and despise, the motives which actuate us. It has become the established creed with men that women have only one object—to obtain their love; and only one aim in life—to be married; and if we show a contempt for these vulgar notions, it is attributed either to the hypocrisy of weak-minded, or the presumption of strong-minded, women. To this ignorance, and not to poorness of spirit and a bad heart, I attribute the sneering tone which has prevailed of late in one or two of our popular reviews. I have seen it with deep pain, knowing, what certainly the clever men who write these reviews cannot be aware of, the injurious effect, the deep-lying, incalculable evil they may produce. It is the natural instinct of woman to look up to man, to desire his approbation, to earn his esteem, to be worthy of his friendship, though she may not obtain his love, nor need his protection. In former days women did not usually read the satires written by men against our sex; they were too gross—in some instances too atrocious even for men to endure, unless recommended by their classical latinity to the study of our school-boys, or those who instruct our school-boys: but reviews and journals are now a part of the reading of all well-educated people; they lie on every drawing-room table. A woman takes up one of these able periodicals, expecting to find instruction, moral sustenance, religious guidance. Possibly she lights upon some article, written, not in Latin, but in choice and vigorous English, by one of those many clever young writers who, it is said, have come to a determination “to put down women.” Here she finds her honest endeavours to raise

her position in life, or to reclaim her fallen sisters, traduced and ridiculed. She perceives that these gentlemanly adversaries do not argue the question of right or wrong, they simply use a power for a purpose. She sees the wit and ability she admires, the superior power to which she would willingly look up for help, here turned against her; the privilege of working out good in any path but that which obsolete custom has prescribed to her is positively refused. If her success in any such path be undeniable, it is acknowledged in an insolently complimentary style as an exceptional case; while the mistakes or failures of certain women are singled out as a theme of the bitterest ridicule, and visited upon *all*. Well! the woman who reads this well-written, brilliant, "unanswerable" article is perhaps at the very time working hard with all the power God has given her, trained by such means as society has provided for her, to gain her daily bread, to assist her struggling family; perhaps she may be sustaining an indigent father, or paying the college debts, or supporting the unacknowledged children, of a dissipated brother (we have known such cases, though we do not speak of them). She reads,—and the words, winged by eloquence and envenomed by a cynical impertinence, sink into her heart, and leave an ulcer there. It is not the facts or the truths which offend, it is the vulgar flippant tone, the slighting allusion, the heartless "jocosity"—to borrow one of their own words—with which men, gentlemanly, accomplished, otherwise generous and honourable men, can sport with what is most sacred in a woman's life—most terrible in a woman's fate. Those who say to us, "Help yourselves!" might say in this case, "Retort is easy!" It is so—too easy! Suppose a woman were to take up the pen and write a review, headed in capital letters, "MEN in the 19th Century!" and pointing to absurd mistakes in legislation; to the want of public spirit in public men; to fraudulent bankruptcies; to mad or

credulous speculations with borrowed gold—to *social evils* of the masculine gender corrupting the homes of others, and polluting their own, and wind up the philippic with—“Of such are our pastors and our masters?” Or respond to an article on “Silly Novels by Lady Novelists,” by an article headed “Silly Novels by Gentlemen Novelists?” True! this might be done—but God forbid that it ever should be done!—God forbid that women should ever enter an arena of contest in which victory, were it possible, would be destruction! The aggravating words of angry women never did any good, written or spoken; and of all things we could look to for help, recrimination were the most foolish and the most fatal. If men can sport with that part of the social happiness and virtue which has been entrusted to them, it is bad enough; but I trust in God that no woman will ever profane the sanctities of life left in her keeping by retorting scorn with scorn, or avenging license by license, for that were not merely to deface the social edifice, but to pull it down upon our heads.

Meantime, those who look on cannot but see that *here* is a mischief done which men have not calculated, and which women cannot avert. It is still worse when these accomplished writers stoop to a mode of attack which allows of no possible retort, and insinuate imputations which no woman can hear without shrinking, and against which self-defence is ignominious. Now, as formerly, reviewers perfectly understand this; “but,” men say, “if women will expose themselves to these attacks, they must endure them;” so then, we may depend on “man’s protection” only so long as we do not need it? I have known a lady who, bent on some mission of mercy, ventured, at an unusual hour, to pass through Oxford-street, and was grossly insulted by a *gentleman* who mistook her calling: but then, “why did she expose herself to such an *accident*?” Why?—because there are

cases in which a woman must do the duty that lies before her even at the risk of a derisive satire or a cowardly insult; just as there are occasions when a man must march straight forward, though he knows he will be shot at from behind a hedge.

I confess that I see in these things grave matter for apprehension. A laugh rings loud in the reading-room of a fashionable club, and meantime there springs up in the minds of intellectual and thoughtful women, high-born and high-hearted, a spirit of silent antagonism far more dangerous than any industrial competition in the working classes.

But there is another cause which might increase this silent social antagonism between men and women, a deep, a terrible, a growing cause, which I touch on with reluctance, but it must be done. We women find ourselves openly called upon in eloquent newspaper articles, in speeches at public meetings, in sermons preached by bishops and zealous clergymen, to assist in stemming that tide of profligacy which is the disgrace of our civilisation; the consequences of which are not merely to lower the moral standard of the two sexes in regard to each other,—though that were fatal enough,—but something worse; more immediate, more positive in its results.

A man returning home at evening from his daily avocations, passes through our streets, infested at that hour by sin, by temptation, by contamination, in the most revolting form,—it is the form of women, foul, tawdry, drunken, bold, and reckless. To question the “expediency” of this “institution” (as I have heard it called—unfortunately not like slavery, a *peculiar* “institution”) does not come across his mind, but he thinks it might be “better managed;” and he returns to the guarded precincts of his home with a more trembling anxiety for its dear and innocent inmates, with a vow to protect them

not only from such pollution, but even from the knowledge of it, and with vague intentions of subscribing to the neighbouring "Refuge," or to the "Society for the protection of young females." Meantime, are his feelings towards woman-kind in general, of added faith, or reverence, or tenderness? are they not rather of terror, of disgust, of scorn, enhanced, scarcely softened, by some touch of self-accusing pity? And then, on the other hand, women brought up in the most refined habits, and appealed to by their spiritual guides, are eager to take in hand the fallen of their sex; to help to endow refugees, to visit penitentiaries. Can a woman of this class, tenderly nurtured, pure in the inmost folds of her heart, become familiar with spectacles of vice, or surmise anything of the habitual lives of the degraded and disordered creatures to whom she ministers, without misgivings sad and terrible? She always knew, in a dim sort of way, that certain immunities are claimed by your sex, and to be conceded by ours;—allowances made for example, temptation, custom, and so forth. But the price paid for these immunities she never knew before; and she breaks her heart, not so much over the victims of her own sex, as over the abasement of her idol and the destruction of her faith. If it be—as she is told it is—an absolute necessity in a Christian community that there should exist a class of women set apart for sacrifice, that every year some thousands of young girls should be consigned to the den of the Minotaur on the plea of public safety, no wonder that womankind should sink low in the sight of man, and manhood in the estimation of woman! No wonder that when men and women meet together, even for works of social good, people should talk of the "religious habit" as the only safeguard! or that if associated together in the most innocent and elevating pursuits—in academies of art, for instance—we should find on

the one side a consciousness of permitted license—very different from manliness, though sometimes mistaken for it; and on the other side a feminine consciousness of peril—very different from modesty, though sometimes also mistaken for it; and that these together should militate against that healthy communion of labour which I have here advocated, besides being a fatal source of that silent moral antagonism which I have pointed out as one of the greatest of our social dangers.

My Lord, it is said that virtuous women ought to know nothing of these things—cannot understand them. Let me speak out plainly, as my age gives me a right to do. No woman can have lived sixty years in the world without knowing something of the great laws of life. It is a mistake to suppose that virtuous Englishwomen cannot make allowances for the strength of passion, or understand the nature and force of some temptations. On the contrary, it is the really virtuous woman who judges most leniently the lapses from virtue, who knows—none better—how difficult it is to be virtuous,—sometimes. But she knows also that in this permitted conventional license, the laws of nature are not less violated than the ordinances of a pure religion; that in men, dissolute habits are something very different from “strong passions;” that in women, vices, which are the result of want, misery, and ignorance, are not “lapses from virtue;” that a frailty, or a temptation here and there, is very different from a class of human beings set apart for destruction in body and soul. When, therefore, she hears “chivalrous” men, while complimenting ladies in drawing-rooms, and boasting of their “allegiance to the sex,” defend this state of things, she knows what to think of them and their “chivalry.”

I come now to another part of this much-vexed “woman-question.” We are asked what privileges, what advantages

can educated Englishwomen require which they do not already possess? and since we admit that we cannot do without man's help, in what form is that help to be given?

I have, in the following Essays, endeavoured to meet these questions in a general way; but to avoid mistakes I will place some of these requirements in a more definite form,—briefly, however, and without going into any details. I am not particularly anxious about those details which trouble our practical men, for I know that when once a theory has been apprehended and accepted by the public mind, the details are worked out sooner or later; it is the battle of opinion, not the difficulties of practice, we have now to meet, and that is the great point in which intellectual and generous men can best help us.

In the first place, then, Englishwomen require that in all public institutions, charitable, educational, sanitary, in which numbers of women and children are congregated, and have to be managed and otherwise cared for, some part of the government should be in the hands of able and intelligent women; that the *maternal* as well as the *paternal* element should be made available, on the principle which I believe is now generally acknowledged, that the more you can carry out the family law, the "communion of labour," into all social institutions, the more harmonious and the more perfect will they be. This supposes, of course, that women so employed should be properly trained for their vocation. The recognition of this vocation, as coming within the "Woman's Sphere" of natural and necessary duties, would be a great public advantage; it would open a field of employment for the educated classes, and it would incalculably benefit the humbler classes of women; but such employment must not be merely tolerated, it must be authorised.

I have given at page 99, an account of a female prison I saw in Germany, in 1855, in which the management and

discipline were almost entirely in the hands of women. The experiment has been tried, within the last three years, in England. The Female Prison at Brixton, containing, when I saw it, upwards of 600 convicts, is managed entirely by a Lady-superintendent, her deputy, and forty matrons. There is, of course, a staff of chaplains and medical officers, but the government and discipline are carried out by trained women. The intermediate female prison at Fulham, into which the reformed convicts are drafted before their release, and in which they must pass the last two years of their term of imprisonment, is in the same manner under the control of an intelligent lady, assisted by a deputy and nine matrons. These innovations, which will appear extraordinary to many "practical" men, have been organised and carried out by Colonel Jebb.

The same plan has been organised in the Irish convict prisons by Captain Crofton, and with less difficulty, because in arranging a system of female management for Roman Catholic convicts, the trained sisters of the religious orders were ready at hand, and, as I have it from his own testimony, have been found most efficient.* "When we want more help," said Captain Crofton, "we send round to the National Schools for the most active and intelligent women they can send us, and we find that they soon understand and enter into the routine of duty." Of course this measure has met with opposition. Of course it is possible, and very probable, that there will be at first individual failures—which, *of course*, will be trumpeted abroad, and made the most of, while similar failures, under similar circum-

* Lord Carlisle also, in his speech at Liverpool, "On the punishment and reformation of Criminals," paid a just tribute to these ladies (the Sisterhood of Mercy at Golden Bridge):—"Feeble and wholly inadequate, indeed, would be any words of mine to do justice to the unremitting self-devotion and cheerful alacrity with which the manager herself, a lady well-born and refined, with her coadjutors, discharges this labour of great love."

stances, made by men are passed by without the least notice—except that where one official fails another is found and substituted. We have heard of chaplains in work-houses too intoxicated to read prayers, and of young curates, ignorant, over-zealous, unwise, who have caused incalculable mischief; but who ever thought of suppressing chaplains, or suppressing curates, as useless or mischievous? So if certain women called to charitable and religious avocations make mistakes, is it therefore to be taken for granted that *all* are inefficient, and the whole system of female co-operation suppressed? The conflict of religious sects, which in England so often perplexes and impedes many a good cause, is rendered especially troublesome by the ignorant, intrusive bigotry of women who think themselves pious, and are at once hard and weak; and nowhere is this conflict more baneful and distressing than when we find it in the dwellings of the poor and by the sick-beds in an hospital: but I must add, that wherever I have met with women particularly remarkable for their sectarian susceptibility, they were always instruments in the hands of sectarian and bigoted men.

I do hope that immediate practical difficulties will not deter courageous and philanthropic men from carrying out what I believe to be God's divine ordinance. The share of administrative and controlling power here given to women in the management of prisons and reformatories, what is it but an enlargement of the family law? Is it not like housekeeping on a wider scale, with its cares and responsibilities elevated in dignity by the feeling of a religious trust held from their country? for these female superintendents, in all respects ladies, are under the control of the Government Commission only. Hitherto this measure has succeeded, and your Lordship may satisfy yourself, that the annual Reports sent in by these female officials are not only conscientious, and admirably well

written, but in the highest degree sensible and suggestive.

Englishwomen would desire to see this system of prison discipline appreciated and extended. They are also desirous that more consideration should be given to certain relative differences in the treatment of male and female convicts. Apparently this has not been taken into account by the Parliamentary Committees on Prison Discipline; at least I have gone through the reports and writings of able and benevolent men on crime and punishment, without finding anything like a recognition of these natural differences, or of the physiological principles on which they must be treated. The convicts of both sexes have hitherto been uniformly considered *en masse* with reference to their crime and their sentence, and with no idea of comparison except as to the numerical result: "so many males guilty of larceny — so many females; so many males condemned to hard labour — so many females." The law which so carefully limits and defines the social privileges and liabilities of woman, allows of no distinction in the relative guilt of the male and female convict. The sentence for the same crime is the same; but the result has been that the crimes and errors of woman, under a show of apparent equality, have been unintentionally visited with a tenfold rigour.

I am not, of course, referring here to certain moral and conventional delinquencies, wherein the social retribution falls wholly and heavily on the woman — that is custom, not law. I am speaking of legal offences visited by legal retribution. We gather from the reports of the chaplains and medical officers of prisons, some facts, of the deep importance of which, considered in their universal application, as *principles*, these officials do not seem themselves aware. It is proved by experience that a term of confinement which benefits a man is injurious to a woman; that a mode of

discipline which falls lightly on a man, is perdition to the moral and physical nature of a woman; that the unfathomable cunning and irritable temper of the female convicts are more difficult to deal with than the stupidity and ferocity of the men, and require a wholly distinct management; that with the male convicts a low diet is often found beneficial, while with the women a low diet brings on an incipient lunacy; the punishment of bread and water diet is much less thought of by the women than by the men; they do not care for it; but while less effective as a punishment, it invariably does mischief. It is proved that the male convicts may be treated in masses and governed by routine, but that the women require, as a necessary condition of health, a more individual treatment; that in spite of the debased lives of these wretched females, in spite of frames rendered coarse by perpetual labour, and tempers cruel from perpetual ill usage, there remains an original delicacy of the nervous organisation which makes the more impressionable creature not only suffer, but deteriorate under a sort of discipline which would be scarcely felt by the stronger sex. This explains, I think, the common observation that depraved women are more unmanageable than depraved men. The same means are tried on both alike, and are not applicable to both alike; where the man is merely punished as society has the right to punish him, the woman is by the same process irretrievably destroyed. "With women," said one of the chaplains, "there is a period beyond which it is *unsafe* as well as *useless* to punish." While pleading against the separation of the sexes in all social intercourse, and for their equal moral responsibility before God and the tribunals of their country, we Englishwomen agree with all intelligent men that there are vital differences which ought not to be lost sight of. We think it hard that such differences should be insisted on where they can be turned

against us, and ignored where they ought to be recognised to our advantage; and we ask that these essential differences and requirements should be more considered, not only in the management of prisons, but in workhouses, asylums, factories, and all institutions in which men and women are relatively concerned.

I have ventured to call your Lordship's attention to these recent experiments in prison discipline, because Englishwomen are of opinion that the same principle of an interfusion of female, or what might be called *maternal* management, is even more obviously applicable to other institutions. For instance, there are two hospitals in London for the treatment of women and female diseases which are governed by men only; and, what is a still more curious anomaly, we have an hospital for sick children in which the constituted authorities consist of *twenty-six* men, (lords and gentlemen) and *one* woman in a subservient position. I have been myself a subscriber to this excellent institution from its commencement, and I know ladies who have contributed largely, generously, as in duty bound; for what woman, what mother, does not feel the value of such an institution? yet when we go there we are merely tolerated. We are "visitors," and may, with the obliging matron's permission, walk over the wards, where, on committee-days, I have myself seen gentlemen, with beard and moustache, and with a lordly air, walking about and examining into all the kind and motherly arrangements for infant accommodation. There is something strangely absurd in all this. Absurd, too, is it not, to see a hundred benevolent gentlemen dining at the Freemasons' Tavern for the benefit of the poor sick babies, and making most eloquent, most pathetic appeals to Christian, and especially feminine compassion, while ladies—matrons and mothers—sit up in a sort of dark cage and look on,—not ungrateful
1 this exhibition of masculine sympathy,—O far from it!

only silently wondering how long a state of things so unseemly, so ridiculous, so unpractical, is to endure in this our decorous, dignified, practical England; and how long the capacities and privileges of women are to be lowered in the estimation of the community by shutting them out of what is surely within the "woman's proper sphere."

Perhaps, however, the greatest, the most fatal mistake which has ever been committed by the exclusion of female supervision, where females are concerned, is the present management of our workhouses.

I have at page 110 endeavoured to portray some of the evils of the present system. Revolting as that picture is, I cannot bate one line of it; not one of the particulars there set down has ever been contradicted: on the contrary, I have had, in letters and other communications from chaplains, ladies, and guardians of the poor, the confirmation of all I have stated. It is true that since these *Essays* were published, that is, within the last four years, some amelioration of these almost incredible mischiefs has taken place in some few localities. Our great London Unions are not precisely in the same state as when some notable examples were reported to the Poor-Law Commissioners. They are not absolutely the abodes of unmitigated filth, vice, tyranny, and torment. This innovation may be traced in great measure to the attention excited by individual cases of misery and oppression, and thence extended to the whole system; and this has led to the formation of a society called the "Workhouse Visiting Society;" with a committee of gentlemen and ladies, numbering at this time about a hundred and fifty members. The objects of this association are "to promote the moral and spiritual improvement of the workhouse inmates; to instruct and comfort the sick and afflicted; to befriend the destitute and orphan children; to humanise the ignorant and depraved adults, especially the women."

To prevent all fear of collision, the members are "to act only with the sanction of the guardians and chaplains; are to visit only at hours convenient to the officials; are to abstain from all interference with the constituted authorities and all meddling with the religious opinions of those who differ with them." Such a society does not seem very dangerous; yet the announcement threw the boards of guardians into a ferment. It became a question whether these lady-visitors were or were not to be admitted: terrible were the mischiefs anticipated from "female interference" (and *interference* it certainly is, so long as it is unsanctioned and unauthorised,—no denying this part of the difficulty);—terrible the collision which was inevitably to take place between educated conscientious women and ignorant and hitherto irresponsible officials! In some few parishes, after discussions "by no means complimentary to the *fair sex*," these benevolent ladies have been admitted, and, under strict regulations, just tolerated: in others, they have been rejected by a majority of the guardians: in others ignored altogether, and treated with contempt. Now there are in the workhouses of England and Wales 52,000 female inmates, and more than 40,000 children; and Englishwomen are naturally desirous that, with regard to these women and children, some moral supervision of a higher kind than that which now exists should be introduced by the parish authorities. In the parish I inhabit are great numbers of widows and unmarried women who pay heavy taxes for the maintenance of the poor; and we cannot understand why we should be absolutely prohibited from all attempts to benefit them morally, and treated as if the wish to do so were a piece of impertinent presumption. We are called upon to minister in refuges for the fallen of our sex, but we are not permitted to use such means as are in our power to prevent the fall of hundreds; for the workhouse system, as I have shown, is

the perdition of girls, and in the perdition of girls just entering into life, lies the perdition of many homes.*

Englishwomen desire that there should be some enquiry into the condition of these places:—how far they fulfil their purpose as Christian and charitable institutions; how far they fulfil their merely economic purpose of keeping down pauperism and vice; what has been the result where lady-visitors have been introduced in some localities, and for what reasons the door has been closed against them in others. It has long been acknowledged by our legislation, that one purpose of a prison is to reform the criminal, but it seems still to be a part of the creed of our municipalities, that one purpose of a workhouse is to punish paupers.† We know too well what spectacles of vice, laziness, and all kinds and degrees of unconvicted crime are to be found within those wretched precincts. But is no ameliorating process to be even attempted? are Englishwomen of tender hearts and good understanding, and gentle and discreet bearing, to be rejected as unfit guardians of the destitute of their own sex; not to be allowed to take an interest in them, yet taxed to contribute to a system which in their conscience they detest? Ladies who have been district-visitors, who have ministered to the sick and aged poor in their homes, think it hard that their protégés should be absolutely abandoned when they enter a workhouse. It has been a reproach to the poor that they would rather go to the prison than go to the Union, and I believe that there are parish officials who would gladly encourage such notions among the parish poor. Now it must be acknowledged that the Reformatory Prison at Fulham is a paradise

* *Vide* "Transactions of the National Association for the Promotion of Social Science:" "On the Objects and Aims of the Workhouse Visiting Society," by Louisa Twining.

† At a meeting of a board of guardians, it was stated by one of the gentlemen present, that workhouses were not built for age, for the destitute orphans, for the sick and disabled, but "*expressly for the slothful and depraved*," and he was applauded.

of neatness, order, and laborious activity compared with some workhouses I have seen ; but are our prisons to be made less humane, or our workhouses more so ?

Englishwomen think that they are not presuming beyond the "Woman's Sphere," when they ask for some enquiry into the "machinery" (not unfitly so called) by which the physical, moral, and spiritual condition of more than 100,000 women and children is controlled, and from what class of men those who constitute this machinery are selected or elected ? Whether it would be found on examination that their education, habits of thought, and habits of life, have prepared them for the deep responsibilities of such a power as is here entrusted to them ? and why the guardianship of the poor is left in general to the lowest order of tradesmen ? I know there are sensible, honest, and humane men among them, who abhor the present state of things, but they form a small section of the whole, and are always outvoted ; for in all cases where numbers rule, the finer element must be in the minority. The higher order of tradesmen, and the gentlemen of the parish, dislike the trouble, and particularly dislike being brought into conflict with the vulgar and more ignorant ; hence we hear daily of such acts of stupidity and cruelty as could not by any possibility emanate from individual folly, but only from collective mediocrity. There are many instances of men of gentlemanly feeling withdrawing themselves in despair of effecting any good. Perhaps this would not be the case if the management of the female departments of the workhouse, and the supervision of the infirmaries, were in some degree modified and elevated by the influence — always under authority — of good and able women.

I know it is argued that women will do mischief, because *that* is always taken for granted ; and it seems universally agreed that in these and similar institutions, the intervention of women must necessarily embarrass men. I

suppose it would at first.. They are not accustomed to work together, nor discuss grave subjects on equal terms; they have not been trained to understand each other's ways, nor to respect each other's independence. Then there is the greatest difficulty in finding women who are in any way prepared for such a vocation; and it is most certain that untrained, narrow-minded, impulsive women, are no more fit to undertake certain duties, than narrow-minded, vulgar shop-keepers. But some enquiry might be made as to the good that has been effected by the ladies who have been admitted as visitors, who have had to gain their own experience, and make their own way, in the face of ridicule, opposition, and every difficulty; and whether, as women are to be found who can be entrusted with the discipline and management of prisons, they might not also be made available in the management of workhouses. For, since it is agreed on all sides, that in these workhouses and other public institutions evils of great magnitude do exist; that they baffle all the means that the intelligence and the munificence of the ruling classes have brought to bear on them; that money, time, thought, and power have been lavished in vain; it might be as well to try whether the interfusion of the feminine element of society might not heal these sufferings, and harmonise these discrepancies and inconsistencies; but then it must be well trained, have a fair trial, and be surrounded by all the *prestige* of authority and experience.

The woman who is to be entrusted with these higher social duties should have the means of preparing herself for them; — as yet such means do not exist. The cry is now for industrial schools for girls — much needed, heaven knows! They will be extended I hope, and wherever established will do infinite good. It is said that the National girls' schools are to be also, in some measure, industrial schools. May I suggest that if there had been some few

lady-inspectors associated with the gentlemen-inspectors for our female National schools some years ago, such absurd mistakes would not have been made in regard to the intellectual culture in these schools. The preference would not have been given to those studies in which proficiency is understood and encouraged by men in boys' schools, to the exclusion or, at least, neglect of those which can be only taught by women, and where women best understand the proficiency and the deficiency. The young women trained in the Normal schools become, under excellent schoolmasters, excellent teachers of grammar, geography, and history, and astonish the inspectors by their acquirements; but suppose that with these bachelor lawyers and these collegians "with philological tastes" there had been associated, some years ago, a few clever rational women and one or two sensible medical men, would not the staff of school-inspectors have been more efficient in regard to the practical requirements in a girl's training?—and if this system of joint-inspection could be extended to those boarding-school "establishments" and seminaries for young ladies, in which the daughters of our farmers and tradesmen are educated, it would be a great public boon. There might be a prejudice against gentlemen-inspectors *only*, but lady-inspectors united with them, and duly authorised, might raise the standard of female education all over the country. I do not understand why the same kind of authorised interest might not be taken in the larger and higher colleges for girls, which we find extended by the Universities to the large academies and colleges for boys. The schoolmasters do not deem it an interference but an honour and a boon, and the schoolmistresses would have the same feeling. It is obvious that where large educational and charitable institutions, comprising the two sexes, have been entirely in the hands of men, as is generally the case, their pity may be for the girls, but their sympathy is for

the boys, whose wants, difficulties, and motives of action they understand; the girls are therefore, unintentionally perhaps, but comparatively neglected.

There is another point of great importance which English-women desire to see taken into account in the comparisons so frequently drawn between the state of education and the criminal statistics, and that is, the comparative *moral* results of education in the two sexes. To illustrate what is meant, here is the computation (omitting the fractions) set down by the chaplain of one of our largest prisons.* Of criminals utterly ignorant, the males are 31 per cent.; the females 50 per cent. Of those imperfectly instructed, the males are 32 per cent., and the females 28 per cent. Of those tolerably instructed, the males are 28, and the females 13 per cent. Of the intelligent, the males are 10, and the females 8 per cent. Of the well-educated, the males are 2, and the females none. I cannot go farther into details, but I believe that the proportion would be found the same in other prisons; and I infer from these numbers that education, even an imperfect education, has more effect in keeping girls out of crime and sin than can be said of boys. May we ask of you, my Lord, who have so long taken an enlightened interest in schemes of national education, whether it might not be worth while to enquire into these things? to ask how it is that there is still so large a proportion of uneducated girls in our community, compared with the opportunities afforded to boys?† and how it happens that in the great number of excellent papers on education, contributed to the society over which your Lordship presides, the education of the female population should be almost wholly ignored? No mention is made of the industrial training of the lower classes of women, nor of the schools which may exist for the middle and pro-

* "The Crime of Liverpool," by the Rev. Thomas Carter.

† See p. 127.

fessional classes, and the principles on which they are managed; and this takes place with the facts and numbers of the educational census and the prison reports before you: in the midst of complaints of the inefficiency and frivolity of women generally, and the acknowledgment, repeated over and over again, that on their better education must depend the happiness and comfort of your homes, and the moral training of your boys.

I merely suggest these considerations to our Education Committees, and to the Society for the Promotion of Social Science. But in regard to education, we Englishwomen require something more. We wish to have some higher kinds of industrial, and professional, and artistic training more freely accessible to women. We wish to have some share, however small, in the advantages which most of our large well-endowed public institutions extend to men only. When the National School of Design was opened to female students, it met with the strongest opposition, and, strange to say, the principal objection was on the score of morality; — one would have thought that all London was to be demoralised, because a certain number of ladies and a certain number of gentlemen had met under the same roof for the study of art. True, the two schools were in distinct, in far-separated apartments, but it was argued the pupils might perhaps meet on the stairs, and then, when going home, who was to protect the young ladies from the young gentlemen? You, my Lord, may have forgotten some of the disgraceful absurdities which gentlemen and artists were not ashamed to utter publicly and privately on that occasion; — I blush to recall them; — I trust we have done with them; and as I am sure men have no reason to fear women as their rivals, so I hope women will, in all noble studies, be allowed henceforth to be their associates and companions.

In relation to this subject, the question now before the

public is whether, in the new edifice to be erected by the Royal Academy of Art on land granted by the Government, it may not be found advisable to include a female school of art? A doubt exists whether the original charter of the Academy did or did not include lady-students, but gentlemen, we might presume, would give them the benefit of the doubt, and naturally take the chivalrous and the generous side of the question. Where women are not specially included in any category, it leads to a most undesirable ambiguity; for, either we are told that "*where men only are named, women are included in the general term, so that it comes to the same thing;*" or, we are told that "*where women are not especially named, they are supposed to be excluded:*" just as the speaker may happen to belong to a board of excise or a council of academicians. But it is not pleaded, I believe, even by those most against us, that women were intentionally or absolutely excluded; the more especially that among the original academicians, in 1769, there were three ladies.* The accomplished and courteous President of the Academy, in his Letter to Lord Lyndhurst, does not plead that women are inadmissible to the privilege of gratuitous instruction extended to students of the other sex, but that the institution is too poor to afford it, and that the present outlay for schools is as much as the funds of the Academy can meet. A small share of the advantages from the present outlay is all that women ask, as a recognition of the principle of justice and equality, but they accept for the present the excuse of poverty. They trust that the future prosperity of the Academy will remove this cause,

* I say nothing of their merits, for that has nothing to do with the question. Of the thirty-six painters, who were the original academicians, about twelve are still remembered. Of the three ladies, one was Angelica Kaufmann, also still remembered, a sort of female West in general feebleness of design, but far more poetical in fancy and conception, and a most charming portrait painter.

that in the designs for the new building some not inadequate space may be reserved for the contingency, that in a few years a Royal Female School of Art, under the auspices of the Royal Academy, may be found both desirable and practicable.

Englishwomen are also desirous that certain departments of medical science should be opened to them, and the means of instruction rendered more accessible. This is no new idea. It is as old, certainly, as the family life, coeval with the first dawn of civilisation; and we do not see why, as civilisation progresses, women should be more and more excluded from what appears to be her natural sphere, if she is to be in any respect the "help meet for man." On the proper training of an order of women, who should act among us like the Sisters of Charity and the Sisters of Mercy in the Roman Catholic Church, I have spoken at large in the following Essays. We have abundance of women overflowing with mercy and charity, but ill-trained for their work. I have spoken of this social need, of the state of destitution of our hospitals, but a few years ago, for want of efficient female help; and the revolution in practice and opinion caused by the expedition of the lady-nurses to the East in 1855. It is a strange, a sorrowful thing—at once painful and exasperating—to hear events, which then thrilled every heart with gratitude and admiration, spoken of now by certain people, in a pretty tone of despondency, as "Quite a failure, you know!—So sad to think of!" How a *failure*? Is that a failure which at the time saved the lives of thousands of brave men? Is that a failure which has led to a higher standard of efficiency in the females employed in the hospitals from one end of England to the other? Is that a failure which has raised in public estimation the character, the responsibilities, the rank and privileges of those admirable and

devoted men, the army-surgeons? Is that a failure which has enlarged our experience in the management and construction of military hospitals? * If another war should come, and find us as deplorably destitute of all the resources which lie in woman's tenderness, intelligence, and energy, as we once were, will it be because that experiment was a failure? or will it be because the funds, which we are told exist in the hands of responsible trustees for the training and organisation of a staff of nurses, have not yet been applied? But it is not merely as nurses in civil and military hospitals that women might be trained, but as managers of rural hospitals, and medical sisters of charity in district-visiting.†

The imperative need of female physicians has been acknowledged by medical men of the highest standing; and if it be now opposed, it is either from some practical difficulties which *can* be surmounted, or from some imaginary difficulties, the result of custom and prejudice, which *will* be surmounted. Every one is aware that there are certain maladies and trials peculiar to one sex. Every wife and mother, and young sensitive female, knows how inexpressibly painful it is in many phases of suffering peculiar to the feminine and maternal organisation, to consult young inexperienced medical men; many young women have suffered cruelly, and some fatally, rather than consult a medical man at all. In the higher classes of society we have it in our power in such afflictions to call in the confidential family physician, who is often the family friend, or to send for some medical man of reputation, experience, and mature age. From these how often has a mother to hear those terrible words, "Had I been

* *Vide* in the "Transactions of the National Association for the Promotion of Social Science," two papers "On the Sanitary Condition of Hospitals, by Florence Nightingale."

† See p. 48.

called in sooner I could have saved your daughter." But how does it fare with the women of the lower middle classes, who cannot afford first-rate attendance; more especially the poor, who are turned over to the juvenile assistant of the parish apothecary? I often think that men who can be tenderly considerate to refined ladies in drawing-rooms, are under the impression that the coarsely-fed and coarsely-dressed labouring women have not the natural feelings of their sex; but those who have visited among the poor, understand the deep dislike they feel to place themselves in the hands of mere boys, who are to gain their experience at the cost of their miserable patients. Then the sufferers have recourse to some woman ignorant and despicable, with such small experience as she may have picked up in village practice, and they place themselves in her incompetent hands.* They are warned again and

* Even while I am writing these pages, a case has occurred in dreadful illustration of what has been said above:—"Crown Court, before Mr. Justice Willes, March 28th, 1859.—A midwife was indicted for manslaughter in causing the death of a woman to whom she was called in, and to whom she had caused extensive injuries by 'gross unskillfulness,' 'mistakes,' and 'drunkenness.' It was pleaded in defence, that it was a case of unusual difficulty; that the woman was sober, not drunk; that there was no intentional culpability; and the woman was acquitted: the learned judge observing, that he had had six or seven similar cases to try at other assizes."—(*Times Newspaper*.)

Dr. Farr, in speaking of the much higher rate of mortality of wives between twenty and thirty over that of husbands of the same age, adds that "this excess is fairly ascribable to the sorrows of childbearing, and, to no small extent, to ignorant midwives."

I will add the testimony of a justly celebrated physician, in a work recently published, "*Locke and Sydenham, and other Essays*," by Dr. Brown. Thus he writes:—

"There is one subject which may seem an odd one for a miscellaneous book like this, but in which I have long felt a deep and deepening interest: to be brief and plain, I refer to *man-midwifery* in all its relations, professional, social, statistical, and moral. Any husband or wife, any father or mother, who will look at the matter plainly, may see what an inlet there is here to possible mischief, to certain unseemliness, and worse. Nature tells us with her own voice what is fitting in such cases; and nothing but the omnipotence of custom, or the urgent cry of peril, and terror, and agony, what Luther calls *miserima miseria*, would make her ask for the presence of a man on such occasion, when she hides herself and is in travail. And, as in all such cases, the evil reacts on the men as a special class, and on the profession itself. It is not of grave, moral delinquencies

again against trusting themselves to such women, wholly uneducated, and without any position or responsibility; but the natural instincts are stronger than any warning, and the means of giving these professional women, if they may be so called, a better training, do not exist. Englishwomen desire that an evil so great should be looked into and considered. There are schools of midwifery in which very young men are instructed theoretically and practically: we desire that these advantages should be extended to female practitioners; that they should have the means of acquiring medical knowledge of a higher kind; that it should be a profession to which well-born and well-educated women might devote themselves; that it should by every possible means be raised in responsibility and public estimation;

I speak, and the higher crimes in this region; it is of affront to Nature, and of the revenge which she always takes on both parties, who actively or passively disobey her. Some of my best and most valued friends are honoured members of this branch (of the medical profession); and, I believe, all the real good they can do, and the real evils they can prevent in these cases, would be attained if, instead of attending (to their own ludicrous loss of time, health, sleep, and temper) some 200 cases of childbirth every year, the immense majority of which are natural and require no interference, but have, nevertheless, wasted not a little of their life, their patience, their understanding, they had, as I would always have them do, and as any well-educated, resolute doctor of medicine ought to be able to do, confined themselves to giving their advice and assistance to the *sage-femme* when she needed it.

"I know much that may be said against this:—'ignorance of midwives,' &c. But to all this I answer, Take pains to educate carefully, and to pay well and treat well these women, and you may safely regulate ulterior means by the ordinary general laws of surgical and medical therapeutics. Thus, instead of a man in general practice, and a man, it may be, with an area of forty miles for his beat, sitting for hours at the bedside of a healthy woman, his other patients, meanwhile, doing the best or the worst they can; and instead of a timid, ignorant, trusting woman, to whom her Maker has given enough of sorrow, being in this hour of her agony and apprehension, subjected to the artificial misery of fearing the doctor may be too late, &c., she might have the absolute security, and womanly hand and heart, of one of her own sex.

"The subject might be argued upon statistical grounds and others; but I peril it chiefly on the whole system being *unnatural*. Therefore, for the sake of those who have borne and carried us, and whom we bind ourselves to love and cherish, to comfort and to honour, and who suffer so much that is inevitable from the primal curse, and for its own sake, let the profession look into this subject in all its bearings, and at once. Child-bearing is a process of health; the exceptions are few indeed; and would, I believe, be fewer, if the doctors would let well alone."

and that no woman should be permitted to practise without a regular diploma, certifying her capability and good moral character. This is the case in Germany. We do not see that it is particularly unpractical or un-English — to use the common phrases. There are at present in London two hospitals for the treatment of female diseases only, and two for children; they are under the management of men, and they are, like our other hospitals, considered as schools for young physicians and surgeons; women, except as nurses and subordinates, are shut out from them. There is now an intention of founding an hospital for women and children, "to be placed under the direction of women-physicians, in connection with a board of consulting physicians and surgeons," in which women will not only be employed in a subordinate capacity, but enter as students.*

Lastly, we Englishwomen desire, or rather with the utmost humility suggest, that some principle of conscientious duty towards women might enter into the usual routine of education. In a large school, boys are trained by precept or opinion to certain duties towards each other, which they must practise as men towards men. Thus they are prepared for their life-battle so far, and for their relations with one half of their species; but how of the other half? Will any one say that their duty towards women is merged in their "duty to their neighbour," and included in the general law of truth, honour, sobriety, and all that is called gentlemanly? Englishwomen regret to see that in the education of their sons and brothers, when entrusted to a great public school, all consideration of their manly duty towards women is either wholly ignored, or if treated at all by a

* "A Course of Lectures recently delivered in London by Doctor Elizabeth Blackwell" (I like to give her a title which she has well earned, and which is legally hers) first suggested this plan; many ladies of education, and rank, and influence, have long been impressed with the want of such an institution, and have appended their names publicly to the advertisement.

conscientious instructor, it is only occasionally as a religious precept which the pupil sees violated with impunity by his elders, and which is contrary to the whole tendency of his classical studies (Homer excepted, as Mr. Gladstone assures us). But the warning when given is not so often inculcated on moral or religious, as on purely selfish grounds, founded on the eventual suffering in various horrible forms entailed by what is cautiously termed "imprudence." I know a father who thought to impress his son's mind by taking him through the wards of an hospital: could he not have placed his duties towards women on higher grounds, considering that his relations with them must form a large part of his obligations as a man in after life?

I have quoted elsewhere the saying, "As the girl is, so the woman is; as the woman is, so the home is; and as the home is, that will be the character of the population for good or evil;" — it is well said, but only the half is said. Has then the training of the boy no result in the character of the man? is the man nothing in the influences of the home? and has he no responsibility in determining the moral results to the population at large? Is it all thrown on the woman? *All!* Englishwomen are really glad, ambitious to take half this responsibility; but we would ask that in the training of the boy some part of those home obligations on which we are emphatically told that the character of our population depends for good or for evil, should be inculcated: then as the home is, so the man will be; and as the man, the nation.

Englishwomen ask, with all humility, that in our schemes of national education these considerations should not be wholly ignored.

My Lord, I have been challenged to set down in a definite form the advantages and privileges which Englishwomen require and do not possess; the objects in which

they desire the help of men, and find a difficulty in obtaining it: I have done so in no defiant, no presumptuous spirit, but with a hope that, if found worthy of attention, they will be openly, wisely, earnestly considered and discussed. Even amid all the clash of foreign war and conflict of political parties echoing round us at this moment, I cannot think it necessary to apologise for calling your Lordship's attention, and that of the Association over which you preside, to some of the questions I have touched upon. It has been said wisely and truly that "all healthy public life springs out of the relations of home," and it is a popular saying that "as the woman is, such is the home," and the aggregate of homes constitutes the nation. I hope it will be remembered that I call for no rash innovations, no fanciful experiments. A State may be revolutionised by a *coup-d'état*, and we know what comes of such revolutions; but society cannot be revolutionised — luckily! You may change a form of government, but you cannot change the life of a community by any outward pressure; it must live and grow by some organic law of development which, to be healthful and permanent, must be gradual. Lord Shaftesbury, in his admirable speech at Liverpool (the wisest and the most practical, to my mind, he ever delivered), described sanitary reform as being partly physical, partly moral. I consider a larger infusion of the female element into our social institutions as one item of that *moral* sanitary reform to which Lord Shaftesbury alludes. Generally speaking, women are by nature helpful, and feel themselves in their "proper sphere" when they have something to do, to suffer, to conquer, for others; but I allow that there are exceptions. I know many who are by their whole organisation unfitted to minister to others. I know women to whom the mere sight of physical suffering, of haggard and decrepit age, of deformity, of mental aberration, of vice and cruelty, causes such positive pain, such

intense disgust, that they could not enter an hospital or a prison without an interval of mental preparation—without a physical recoil through every nerve; such are often the women of artistic temperament, born to be objects to others, not to make objects of others; with hands which we see were never formed to do anything—only to be held out to be kissed, like those of Giovanna d'Arragona, in Raphael's picture. Well, in "this working-day world" we accept them, and make room for them, and are glad and thankful that God has given them to us; but because we have such charmers—charm they wisely or unwisely—is that a reason why *all* women should be trained as if the sole purpose of their existence was to please? as if for us life had not its solemn and sacred significance, its responsible present, its awful hereafter, as well as for men? You, my Lord, and many others, have openly expressed the opinion that it is to women we must look for the "regeneration of society." For myself, I hesitate to believe that social morals, social progress, can depend wholly on one-half of the human race. But if such be the will of God, if to such lofty duties, such a dread responsibility, we are called by His providence and by the dictate of those who rule our earthly destinies, these can only be fulfilled through our influence over the minds as well as the hearts of men; and for this influence to be exercised effectively and healthfully, two things are necessary:—that in the higher classes the woman's standard of manly virtue, and in the working classes the man's standard of feminine virtue, be both more elevated; and that the woman's sphere of knowledge and activity should be limited only by her capacities.

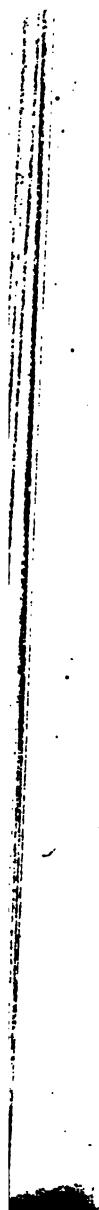
I have the honour to be,

&c., &c.,

ANNA JAMESON.

SISTERS OF CHARITY

ETC.



INTRODUCTION TO THE SECOND EDITION.

NURSES, HOSPITALS, WORKHOUSES, BARRACK-ROOMS.

A SECOND Edition of this little lecture (or essay, for I hardly know which to call it) being required within the short period of a month, I seize the opportunity to add a few words.

The principles here so briefly and so imperfectly announced have met with a reception altogether unexpected, and which certainly I do not take to be any testimony to the merit of the book, as such, but rather as a proof that it has struck upon a chord of feeling in the public mind, tuned and ready to vibrate to the most unpractised touch. So unlooked-for, indeed, has been the general expression of responsive sympathy, public and private, that the hand laid thus timidly and unskilfully upon the chords, almost "recoils from the sound itself hath made."

Not less have I been touched with pleasure and surprise by the numerous communications which almost every post has brought to me from medical men, from clergymen, from intelligent women (the greater number strangers to me personally), either expressive of cordial sympathy, or conveying practical suggestions, or offering aid and co-operation; — all, however various the contents, testifying to the great truths I have endeavoured to illustrate in these pages: namely, that there exists at the core of our social condition a great mistake to be corrected, and a great want plied; that men and women must learn to understand

each other, and work together for the common good, before any amount of permanent moral and religious progress can be effected; and that, in the most comprehensive sense of the word, we need SISTERS OF CHARITY everywhere.

In some few of these letters a tone of expostulation mingles with that of kind approval; and my attention is directed to various institutions which exist at present as filling up the want I have pointed out;—for instance, the efficiency of some of the Normal schools for the preparation of female teachers, and the encouragement which has been given to the houses established for training sick nurses, are especially dwelt upon. I learn that one of our most distinguished men entertains the project of organising “classes” for working-women, as he has already aided in elevating the mental and moral standard for the working-men. Again, there are hopes that, in spite of all opposing influences, lessons in elementary physiology will be more generally introduced into schools. God forbid that we should be insensible to the efforts which have been made, and are extending in all directions, for the amelioration of crying social evils! But what we require is not more benevolence, but the general recognition of sounder and larger principles than have hitherto directed that benevolence. With all our schools of all denominations, it remains an astounding fact that one half of the women who annually become wives in this England of ours cannot sign their names in the parish register; that this amount of ignorance in the lower classes of women is accompanied by an amount of ill health, despondency, inaptitude, and uselessness in the so-called “educated classes;” which, taken together, prove that our boasted appliances are, to a great extent, failures.

And, first, with regard to the means afforded for training nurses for the sick. I would ask what is the number of women so trained? Does it amount to one in every

500,000 of our female population? Does it amount to 100 altogether? and for whose service are these women trained? Are they distributed among our village poor, our country infirmaries? Up to a very recent period, till the need of nurses for the East excited public attention, were not the greater number of these trained nurses in the service of the rich? What is done is well done, perhaps; let us be thankful it is done; but is it sufficient? Does it meet those wants in the community which I have ventured to point out in the pages which follow?

Go into yon spacious hospital, provided with all that wealth, and skill, and knowledge can combine to heal or to ameliorate bodily suffering: see the floors how clean, the linen how spotless, the beds how comfortable! the most celebrated of our surgeons and physicians are in attendance; students from every part of England crowd thither; —it is one of the best of our medical schools. Let us approach a bed; —it is a poor pale girl, dying of a slow decline; she has been stretched there for eleven months; the chaplain duly visits her once or twice a week in her turn, for he has about five hundred other human souls to attend to. The physician, as he goes his rounds, pats her on the head; asks her, in a tone of unusual pity, the usual questions; then, perhaps, turns to two or three students who follow him, and almost aloud expresses his wonder to find her still alive. The nurse duly administers the prescription, and on pain of dismissal sees that every want is attended to. Is nothing else needed? Is anything else supplied? A melancholy religious tract, perhaps: but for the spontaneous action of mind upon mind,—for tender, human, sympathising love, — for help to the sinking spirit, — where are they? It is no answer to appeal to individual cases; to cite one or two hospitals, in which thoughtful and kindly women of the higher classes have been permitted to visit; — in which the superior intellect

and administrative faculties of the matron for the time being have exercised an improving influence. These are the exceptions; and until larger, higher principles of action are generally recognised, they will continue to be *accidental* exceptions to the prevalence of a narrow-minded mechanical system.

In several of the letters I have received, the condition of some of our workhouses, in town and country, is set forth at length: and surely it is worth considering whether the administration of these institutions might not be improved by the aid of kindly and intelligent women sharing with the overseers the task of supervision.* The most conscientious men are apt to treat the wretched paupers as if they had neither hearts to be touched, nor souls to be saved. The paid matrons are taken from a class scarcely a grade above them; often as ignorant, as miserable, as debased as themselves, and wholly unfit to be intrusted with power. Do the aged, while swallowing, perforce the dregs of a bitter life, find any reverence, any pity? Do the children — poor little scraps of a despised humanity — find tenderness, freedom, or cheerfulness? Can any one doubt that the element of power disunited from the element of Christian love must, in the long run, become a hard, cold, cruel machine? and that this must of *necessity* be the result where the masculine energy acts independent of the feminine sympathies? The men who manage in their own way these abodes of destitution, dread, not without some reason, any troublesome interference with established routine through the intervention of impulsive womanly instincts, which, ill-trained, mis-

* "The Workhouse Visiting Society," in connexion with the National Association for the Promotion of Social Science, has been instituted since the first publication of these lectures; but it is as yet in its infancy, and the supervision of the ladies, rejected in some cases, is in others only tolerated rather than authorised. See the following lecture.

directed, and unenlightened, may do mischief; but must they, therefore, be set wholly aside? How long shall this absurd and unmanly jealousy in one class of men—the men who fill public or municipal offices—be allowed to petrify the public heart, and cripple the means of doing good? How long shall the narrow prejudices of another class of men—the husbands, brothers, and fathers— withhold women from the sphere of healthy action, and thus perpetuate and widen the gulf which separates class from class?

The principle kept in view by the Poor Law guardians and overseers is to save the money of the parish, — a very proper and honourable principle in those who have to administer it; — but is not a wiser and more beneficent expenditure of the parish rates possible? Some of those who are largely taxed to pay those rates think so. Since it is allowed on all hands that we want Institutions for the training of efficient “Sisters of Charity” for all offices connected with the sick, the indigent, the fallen, and the ignorant among us, why should not our parish workhouses be made available for the purpose? In such an application of means and funds already at hand, it appears to me that there would be both good sense and economy, therefore it ought to recommend itself to our so-called practical men.*

I remember when, some years ago, the first trial was made at Birmingham to institute what has since been called “Schools for the Adult Females employed in the Manufactories.” The Legislature had restricted the hours of labour, and the women, when dismissed from work, shrunk into lonely, dirty, neglected homes, or walked the streets, or congregated in the vilest public-houses. They earned

* On the subject of workhouses see also the “*Prefatory Letter*” and the essay which follows, “*The Communion of Labour*,” where the present system is treated with more detail.

good wages, yet hardly one in ten could read or write; they were ignorant of any feminine or household work; they were dirty, reckless, wasteful; unsexed, if not unchaste. Some ladies, true "Sisters of Charity," united to open a refuge where these women could obtain light and warmth without the temptation of drink and bad company, and the means of instruction if they were so minded, although it was not forced upon them. Will it be believed that every possible difficulty and obstacle was thrown in the way of this project by masters and overseers? — Those who undertook the work of mercy, and at length carried it out, had to conquer the ground occupied by masculine prejudices inch by inch; and now it is among the women they have rescued that the employers seek their steadiest female "hands," that the workmen look for tidy, good-tempered wives.

Another point to which my attention has been drawn, and which has an especial interest at present, is the condition of the soldiers' wives. I hardly dare to describe the state of things which has been allowed to exist in the barracks and military depôts up to the present time; — from six to sixteen married couples sleeping together in one room, and in some instances unmarried girls, daughters of the soldiers, living among them, and brought up in this human sty! When a woman of decent habits is introduced to such a scene, can we wonder that in a few weeks she should become a mere female beast, or learn to drown in drink the unutterable misery and degradation of her position? Who are the "officers and gentlemen" who honour their mothers, who guard with such care the delicacy of their wives and daughters, yet can expose women to ignominy like this? If the wives of these "officers and gentlemen" were expected, as a matter of duty, incident to their social position, or, at least, were allowed by their husbands, to take an interest in the well-

being of the soldiers and their wives, could these things have existed? Is it not matter of astonishment and humiliation among us that the expediency of giving decent lodging to the married men is only now discussed by the military authorities? * I would suggest that the well-educated, and benevolent, and energetic women married to officers in command should take counsel with their husbands on the possibility of organising into an efficient working staff the women who belong to each regiment. Instead of only the most depraved and worthless women being allowed to inhabit the barracks, these should be turned out, while the most respectable should be retained and classed according to their capabilities; some as teachers of the children; some as nurses of the sick; others as sempstresses to mend and take care of the linen; others as washerwomen. What sort of creatures were those who went to the Crimea with our army? — Were they not a despair, a disgrace to our authorities, — as utterly useless as they were utterly worthless? We have now the spirit of a noble womanhood, roused up at home and at a distance, to remedy these evils; but had it been earlier roused, and earlier used and appreciated, such evils never could have existed.

I must conclude by thanking my correspondents generally for the approbation which has cheered, and the sympathy which has comforted. Considerations of health take me far away from England for the present; but on my return I hope to find kindly and active spirits and wise heads doing the practical work which I cannot do myself. It has been said that we need some protest against the tendency of this age to deify mere material power, mere mechanism,

* In 1855. Since then the moral and sanitary condition of the army has become a subject of deep public interest, but much remains to be done. See Mr. Sydney Herbert's pamphlet "*On the Sanitary Condition of the Army*," published in 1858.

mere intellect, and what is called the "philosophy of the *positif*." It appears to me that God's good providence is preparing such a counterpoise in the more equal and natural apportioning of the work that is to be done on earth; in the due mingling of the softer charities and purer moral discipline of the home life with all the material interests of social and political life; in the better training of the affectionate instincts of woman's nature, and the application of these to purposes and objects which have hitherto been considered as out of our province or beyond our reach; for what can concern the community at large which does not concern women, and what can concern women which does not concern the community at large?

A. J.

MAY 1, 1855.

SISTERS OF CHARITY

ABROAD AND AT HOME.

A Lecture

(Delivered privately February 14, 1855, and printed by desire).

MY FRIENDS!

THE subject on which I venture to address you is one which will find an interest in every kind heart. It is also one of incalculable social importance. I am to discourse to you of SISTERS OF CHARITY, not merely as the designation of a particular order of religious women, belonging to a particular church, but also in a far more comprehensive sense, as indicating the vocation of a large number of women in every country, class, and creed. I wish to point out to you what has been done in other countries, and may be done in ours, to make this vocation available for public uses and for social progress.

I have to beg your patience, — your indulgence. It will be necessary for me to advert to subjects on which there exists considerable difference of opinion; while the brevity required by a lecture will not allow me to discuss these at length, or to submit all the arguments which might be advanced in favour of my own convictions. I am obliged to concentrate what I have to say into the smallest possible compass; nevertheless, by recurring to first principles, instead of discussing ways and means, and questions of expediency, I think I shall facilitate the object in view. The deeper we can lay our foundation, the safer will be our superstructure. Therefore, to begin at the beginning.—

There are many different theories concerning the moral purposes of this world in which we dwell, considered, I

mean, in reference to us, its human inhabitants; for some regard it merely as a state of transition between two conditions of existence, a past and a future; others as being worthless in itself, except as a probation or preparation for a better and a higher life; while others, absorbed or saddened by the monstrous evils and sorrows around them, have really come to regard it as a place of punishment or penance for sins committed in a former state of existence. But I think that the best definition,—the best, at least, for our present purpose,—is that of Shakespeare: he calls it, with his usual felicity of expression, "*this working-day world*;" and it is truly this: it is a place in which work is to be done—work which *must* be done—work which it is *good* to do;—a place in which labour of one kind or another is at once the condition of existence and the condition of happiness.

Well, then, in this working-day world of ours we must all work. The only question is, what shall we do? To few is it granted to choose their work. Indeed, all work worth the doing, seems to leave us no choice. We are called to it. Sometimes the voice so calling is from within, sometimes from without; but in any case it is what we term expressively our *vocation*, and in either case, the harmony and happiness of life in man or woman consists in finding in our vocation the employment of our highest faculties, and of as many of them as can be brought into action.

And work is of various kinds: there are works of necessity and works of mercy;—*head* work, *hand* work;—man's work, woman's work; and on the distribution of this work in accordance with the divine law, and what Milton calls the "faultless proprieties of nature," depends the well-being of the whole community, not less than that of each individual.

Domestic life, the acknowledged foundation of all social life, has settled by a natural law the work of the man and the work of the woman. The man governs, sustains, and defends the family; the woman cherishes, regulates, and purifies it; but though distinct, the relative work is inseparable,—sometimes exchanged, sometimes shared; so that from the beginning, we have, even in the primitive household, not the *division*, but the *communion* of labour.

As civilisation advances, as the social interests and occupations become more and more complicated, the family duties and influences diverge from the central home,—in a manner, radiate from it,—though it is always there in reality. The man becomes, on a larger scale, father and brother, sustainer and defender; the woman becomes, on a larger scale, mother and sister, nurse and help.

Of course, the relations thus multiplied and diffused are less sacred, less intense, but also less egotistical, less individual, than in the primitive tent of the Arab, the lodge of the red-man, or within the precincts of the civilised hearth; but in proportion as we can carry out socially the family duties and charities, and perform socially the household work, just in such proportion is society safely and harmoniously constituted.

If domestic life be then the foundation and the bond of all social communities, does it not seem clear that there must exist between man and woman, even from the beginning, the communion of love and the communion of labour? By the first I understand all the benevolent affections and their results, and all the binding charities of life, extended from the home into the more ample social relations; and in the latter I comprehend all the active duties, all intellectual exercise of the faculties, also extended from the central home into the larger social circle. When from the cross those memorable words were uttered by our Lord, "Behold thy Mother! Behold thy Son!" do you think they were addressed only to the two desolate mourners who then and there wept at his feet? No—they were spoken, like all his words, to the wide universe, to all humanity, to all time!

I rest, therefore, all I have to say hereafter upon what I conceive to be a great vital truth,—an unchangeable, indisputable, natural law. And it is this: that men and women are by nature mutually dependent, mutually helpful; that this communion exists not merely in one or two relations, which custom may define and authorise, and to which opinion may restrict them in this or that class, in this or that position; but must extend to every possible relation in existence, in which the two sexes can be socially approximated. Thus, for instance, a man, in

the first place, merely sustains and defends his home; then he works to sustain and defend the community or the nation he belongs to. And so of woman; she begins by being the nurse, the teacher, the cherisher of her home, through her greater tenderness and purer moral sentiments; then she uses these qualities and sympathies on a larger scale, to cherish and purify society. But still the man and the woman must continue to share the work; there must be the communion of labour in the large human family, just as there was within the narrower precincts of home.

You will wonder that I begin with truisms such as no man in his senses ever thinks of disputing; but the wonder is that, while admitted, they are never acted upon. Can you give me any one instance in which this primal law of our being, with regard to the distribution of work, has been taken as the natural and necessary basis for any improvement in legislation or in education? Can you point to any one among these piles of Blue-books and reports, — educational reports, sanitary reports, jail reports, juvenile delinquent reports, — in which such principles are adverted to? It is granted as a principle that ample scope should be given for the man to perform his share of the social work, and ample means of instruction to enable him to perform it well. What provision is made to enable the woman to do *her* work well and efficiently?

It is not charity, nor energy, nor intelligence which are wanting in our women, any more than dauntless bravery in our men. But something *is* wanting; or surely from so much good material, more positive and extended social benefits would arise. What *is* wanting is more moral courage, more common sense, on the part of our legislators. If men were better educated, they would sympathise in the necessity of giving a better education to women. They would perceive the wisdom of applying, on a large and efficient scale, the means of health, strength, and progress which lie in the gentler capacities of the gentler sex, — material ready at hand, as yet wasted in desultory, often misdirected, efforts, or perishing inert, or fermenting to evil and despair.

Lying at the source of the mischief, we trace a great *mistake* and a great *want*.

The great *mistake* seems to have been that in all our legislation it is taken for granted that the woman is always protected, always under tutelage, always within the precincts of a home; finding there her work, her interests, her duties, and her happiness: but is this true? We know that it is altogether false. There are thousands and thousands of women who have no protection, no guide, no help, no home;—who are absolutely driven by circumstance and necessity, if not by impulse and inclination, to carry out into the larger community the sympathies, the domestic instincts, the active administrative capabilities with which God has endowed them; but these instincts, sympathies, capabilities, require, first, to be properly developed, then properly trained, and then directed into large and useful channels, according to the individual tendencies. As to the *want*, what I insist on particularly is, that the means do not exist for the training of those powers; that the sphere of duties which should occupy them is not acknowledged; and I must express my deep conviction that society is suffering in its depths through this great mistake and this great want.

We require in our country the recognition—the public recognition,—by law as well as by opinion, of the woman's privilege to share in the communion of labour at her own free choice, and the foundation of institutions which shall train her to do her work well.

I am anxious that you should not misunderstand me at the outset with regard to this "*woman-question*," as it has been called. I have no intention to discuss either the rights or the wrongs of women. I think that on this question our relations across the Atlantic have gone a mile beyond the winning-post, and brought discredit and ridicule on that just cause which, here in England, prejudice, custom, ignorance have in a manner crushed and smothered up. It is in this country, beyond all Christian countries, that what has been called, quaintly but expressively, the "*feminine element of society*," considered as a power applicable in many ways to the amelioration of many social evils, has been not only neglected, but absolutely ignored by those who govern us. The woman cries out for the occasion and the means to do well her appointed and permitted work, to perform worthily her share in the natural

communion of labour. Because it is denied to her she perishes, "and no man layeth it to heart."*

* The soliloquy of the young girl in "Shirley" is as exquisitely true to the individual character as it is illustrative generally of an outward state of things which shuts down the safety-valves on the morbid feeling, until a condition of health arising out of natural causes, and which Nature intended to be temporary and healable, becomes chronic and permanent:—"Nobody" (she is thinking aloud) "nobody in particular is to blame, that I can see, for the state in which things are; and I cannot tell, however much I puzzle over it, how they are to be altered for the better; but I feel there is something wrong somewhere. I believe single women should have more to do—better chances of interesting and profitable occupation than they possess now; and when I speak thus I have no impression that I displease God by my words, that I am either impious or impatient, irreligious or sacrilegious. My consolation is, indeed, that God hears many a groan, and compassionates much grief, which man stops his ears against, or frowns on with impotent contempt. I say *impatient*, for I observe that to such grievances as society cannot readily cure it usually forbids utterance, on pain of its scorn; this scorn being only a sort of tinselled cloak to its deformed weakness. People hate to be reminded of ills they are unable or unwilling to remedy; such reminder, in forcing on them a sense of their own incapacity, or a more painful sense of an obligation to make some unpleasant effort, troubles their ease and shakes their self-complacency. Old maids, like the houseless and unemployed poor, should not ask for a place and an occupation in the world; the demand disturbs the happy and rich; it disturbs parents. Look at the numerous families of girls in this neighbourhood—the Armitages, the Birtwhistles, the Sykes. The brothers of these girls are every one in business or in professions; they have something to do: their sisters have no earthly employment but household work and sewing; no earthly pleasure but an unprofitable visiting; and no hope, in all their life to come, of anything better. This stagnant state of things makes them decline in health; they are never well, and their minds and views shrink to wondrous narrowness. The great wish, the sole aim, of every one of them is to be married; but the majority will never marry: they will die as they now live. They scheme, they plot, they dress to ensnare husbands. The gentlemen turn them into ridicule; they don't want them; they hold them very cheap; they say—I have heard them say it with sneering laughs many a time—the matrimonial market is overstocked. Fathers say so likewise, and are angry with their daughters when they observe their manoeuvres; they order them to stay at home. What do they expect them to do at home? If you ask, they would answer, sew and cook. They expect them to do this, and this only, contentedly, regularly, uncomplainingly, all their lives long, as if they had no germs of faculties for anything else;—a doctrine as reasonable to hold as it would be that the fathers have no faculties but for eating what their daughters cook, or for wearing what they sew. Could men live so themselves? would they not be very weary? and when there came no relief to their weariness, but only reproaches at its slightest manifestation, would not their weariness ferment in time to frenzy? Lucretia, spinning at midnight in the midst of her maidens, and Solomon's virtuous woman, are often quoted as patterns of what 'the sex' (as they say) ought to be. I don't know: Lucretia, I dare say, was a most worthy sort of person, but she kept her servants up very late. I should not have liked to

It is true that there is no law which forbids the woman to use her energies; but we might as well say that no law exists in China which forbids a woman to take a walk into the country. The Chinese content themselves with bandaging and crippling the feet of their women, which is found, as a preventive, quite as effectual as any law. In a very entertaining book about China, which has lately appeared, the author, M. Huc, describes some Chinese ladies setting off on a pilgrimage. Hobbling on their cramped

be amongst the number of the maidens. The 'virtuous woman,' again, had her household up in the very middle of the night. She 'got breakfast over' before one o'clock A.M.; but *she* had something more to do than spin and give out portions. She was a manufacturer; she made fine linen and sold it. She was an agriculturist; she bought estates and planted vineyards. *That* woman was a manager. She was what the matrons hereabouts call 'a clever woman.' On the whole, I like her a good deal better than Lucretia; but I don't believe either Mr. Armitage or Mr. Sykes could have got the advantage of her in a bargain; yet I like her!—'Strength and honour were her clothing. The heart of her husband safely trusted in her. She opened her mouth with wisdom; in her tongue was the law of kindness; her children rose up and called her blessed; her husband also praised her.' King of Israel! your model of a woman is a worthy model! But are we, in these days, brought up to be like her? Men of England! do your daughters reach this royal standard? Can they reach it? Can you help them to reach it? Can you give them a field in which their faculties may be exercised and grow? Men of England! look at your poor girls, many of them fading around you, dropping off in consumption or decline; or, what is worse, degenerating to sour old maids,—envious, backbiting, wretched, because life is a desert to them; or, what is worst of all, reduced to strive, by scarce modest coquetry and debasing artifice, to gain that position and consideration by marriage which to celibacy is denied. Fathers! cannot you alter these things? Perhaps not all at once; but consider the matter well when it is brought before you: receive it as a theme worthy of thought; do not dismiss it with an idle jest or an unmanly insult. You would wish to be proud of your daughters, and not to blush for them. Then seek for them an interest and an occupation which shall raise them above the flirt, the manœuvrer, the mischief-making tale-bearer. Keep your girls' minds narrow and fettered,—they will still be a plague and a care, sometimes a disgrace to you. Cultivate them—give them scope and work—they will be your gayest companions in health, your tenderest nurses in sickness, your most faithful prop in age."

I had the opportunity, on different occasions, of showing this striking passage to two clever men. One of them listened attentively, and then said, with a half-sigh, "She ought to emigrate!" The other, rather impatiently, and with a half-sneer, thus commented,—"*The girl ought to be married!*" Marriage and emigration have both their difficulties. And must women in this country be driven to one of these two alternatives? or resign themselves to become, as some one expresses it, the "female of the tutor or the tailor?" And this too when they are needed on every hand, in works of necessity or works of mercy?

feet, and supporting themselves with a stick, they reach at last the temple to which they are bound. So it is with our women: they attain their objects; but what God made natural, graceful, and easy, is rendered matter of pain and difficulty, is regarded as an indecorum or an extravagance and is very awkwardly and imperfectly achieved, if at all.

Now the problem which it is given to us in this age and this country to solve as well as we can,—to solve, I will say it, or perish morally,—has been partially solved by another church in other countries. And before I proceed to consider the subject with reference to the present condition of society and public opinion among us, let it be permitted to me to advert briefly to the institutions of charitable women, in the Roman Catholic Church, not because I think or wish that these institutions could or ought to be carried out among us precisely in the same manner, as a purely religious establishment, subservient to a hierarchy; but because I am anxious to show you the immense results of a well-organised system of work for women.

I know that many well-meaning, ignorant people in this country entertain the idea that the existence of communities of women, trained and organised to help in social work from the sentiment of devotion, is especially a Roman Catholic institution, belonging peculiarly to that church, and necessarily implying the existence of nuns and nunneries, veils and vows, forced celibacy and seclusion, and all the other inventions and traditions which, in this Protestant nation, are regarded with terror, disgust, and derision. I conceive that this is altogether a mistake. The truth seems to me to amount to this: that the Roman Catholic Church has had the good sense to turn to account, and assimilate to itself, and inform with its own peculiar doctrines, a deep-seated principle in our human nature,—a law of life, which we Protestants have had the folly to repudiate. We admire and reverence the beautiful old cathedrals which our Roman Catholic ancestors built and endowed. If we have not inherited them, we have, at least, appropriated them and made them ours; we worship God in them, we say our prayers in them after our own hearts. Can we not also appropriate and turn to account some of the institutions they have left us—inform them with a spirit more consonant with our national-character and the requirements of

the age, and dedicate them anew to good and holy purposes? What prevents us from using Sisters of Charity, as well as fine old cathedrals and colleges, for pious ends, and as a means of social benefit? Are we as stern, as narrow-minded, as deficient in real, loving faith as were our puritanical forefathers, when they not only defaced and desecrated, but would gladly, if they could, have levelled to the earth and utterly annihilated, those monuments of human genius and human devotion? Luckily they stand in their beauty, to elevate the minds and hearts of us, the descendants of those who built and dedicated them, and who boast that we have reformed, not destroyed the Church of Christ!—and let me say that these institutions of female charity, to which I have referred,—institutions which had their source in the deep heart of humanity, and in the teaching of a religion of love,—let me say that these are better and more beautiful and more durable than edifices of stone reared by men's hands, and worthy to be preserved and turned to pious uses, though we can well dispense with some of those ornaments and appendages which speak to us no more.

FEMALE RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES.

It would take far too much time were I to go over the history of the early ages of Christendom, and show you that women, associated under the ruling civil and ecclesiastical powers, were then officially, but voluntarily, employed in works of social good. That these women should have been early associated with the church, and held their duties by ecclesiastical appointment, was natural and necessary, because all moral sway, and all moral influence, and all education, and every peaceful and elevating pursuit, belonged, for many centuries, to the ecclesiastical order only. The singular and beneficent power exercised by the religious and charitable women in those times is remarked by all writers, though none of them refer it to a natural law—a great first cause. The whole of the early history of Christianity is full of examples. I will give you one which, on looking over these authorities, struck me vividly.

--Paula, a noble Roman lady, a lineal descendant of the

Scipios and the Gracchi, is mentioned among the first Christian women remarkable for their active benevolence. In the year 385 she quitted Rome, then still a Pagan city with the remains of a large fortune, which had been expended in aiding and instructing a wretched and demoralised people, and accompanied by her daughter, she sailed for Palestine, and took up her residence in Bethlehem of Judea. There, as the story relates, she assembled round her a community of women "as well of noble estate as of middle and low lineage." They took no vows, they made no profession, but spent their days in prayer and good works, having especially a well-ordered hospital for the sick.

In the old English translation of her life there is a picture of this charitable lady which I cannot refrain from quoting: "She was marvellous debonair, and piteous to them that were sick, and comforted them, and served them right humbly; and gave them largely to eat such as they asked; but to herself she was hard in her sickness and scarce, for she refused to eat flesh how well she gave it to others, and also to drink wine. She was oft by them that were sick, and she laid the pillows aright and in point; and she rubbed their feet, and boiled water to wash them; and it seemed to her that the less she did to the sick in service, so much the less service did she to God, and deserved the less mercy; therefore she was to them piteous and nothing to herself."

This picture, drawn fifteen hundred years ago, so quaintly graphic, and yet so touching in its simplicity, will, perhaps, bring before the mind's eye of those who listen to me, scenes of the same kind, where female ministry has been called upon to do like offices of mercy; — to wash the wounds and smooth the couch, and "lay the pillow aright," of the maimed, the war-broken, the plague-stricken soldier. But we must for a while turn back to the past.

It is in the seventh century that we find these communities of charitable women first mentioned under a particular appellation. We read in history that when Landry, Bishop of Paris, about the year 650, founded an hospital, since known as the Hôtel Dieu, as a general refuge for disease and misery, he placed it under the direction of the *Hospitalières*, or nursing-sisters of that time,—

women whose services are understood to have been voluntary, and undertaken from motives of piety. Innocent IV., who would not allow of any outlying religious societies, collected and united these hospital-sisters under the rule of the Augustine Order, making them amenable to the government and discipline of the Church. The novitiate or training of a *Sœur Hospitalière* was of twelve years' duration, after which she was allowed to make her profession. At that time, and even earlier, we find many hospitals expressly founded for the reception of the sick pilgrims and wounded soldiers returning from the East, and bringing with them strange and hitherto unknown forms of disease and suffering. Some of the largest hospitals in France and the Netherlands originated in this purpose, and were all served by the *Hospitalières*; and to this day the *Hôtel Dieu*, with its one thousand beds, the hospital of St. Louis, with its seven hundred beds, and that of *La Pitié*, with its six hundred beds, are served by the same sisterhood, under whose care they were originally placed centuries ago.

For about five hundred years the institution of the *Dames* or *Sœurs Hospitalières* remained the only one of its kind. During this period it had greatly increased its numbers, and extended all through western Christendom; still it did not suffice for the wants of the age; and the thirteenth century, fruitful in all those results which a combination of wide-spread suffering and religious ferment naturally produces, saw the rise of another community of compassionate women destined to exercise a far wider influence. These were the *Sœurs Grises* or Grey Sisters, so called at first, from the original colour of their dress. Their origin was this:—the Franciscans (and other regular orders) admitted into their community a third or secular class, who did not seclude themselves in cloisters, who took no vows of celibacy, but were simply bound to submit to certain rules and regulations, and united together in works of charity, devoting themselves to visiting the sick in the hospitals or at their own homes, and doing good wherever and whenever called upon. Women of all classes were enrolled in this sisterhood. Queens, princesses, ladies, of rank, wives of burghers, as well as poor widows and maidens. The higher class and the married women oc-

asionally served; the widows and unmarried devoted themselves almost entirely to the duties of nursing the sick in the hospitals. Gradually it became a vocation apart, and a novitiate or training of from one to three years was required to fit them for their profession.

When at Florence, in 1857, I found the noble hospital of S. Maria-Nuova, the Hôtel Dieu of Florence, served by this Franciscan sisterhood, to whom it really belonged, though all responsibility with regard to the management had long been taken from them and placed in the hands of government officials. In former times there were at least thirty-three hospitals, each of the guilds or companies having its own, supported by its own members and managed by religious sisterhoods and confraternities. All these small hospitals became gradually merged in the large one; this rendered the whole establishment more convenient as a medical school, and an assemblage of professorships, but the patients probably suffered from being crowded under one roof. At the time I visited it there were nearly 3000 sick. The small old hospital, from which the present magnificent institution originally sprung, has been gradually enlarged. It was founded by Folco Portinari, the father of Dante's Beatrice, who gave it to the charitable nuns. According to the tradition of the place, he had been persuaded to this act of charity by his faithful housekeeper, Madonna Tessa, whose very ancient and homely effigy, removed apparently from her sepulchre, is fixed in the wall of one of the entrances. Underneath is an inscription, purporting that the surrounding edifice owed its beginning to her; but I do not think that many care to decipher it. The Sisterhood resided in their convent on the opposite side of the piazza, and a subterranean gallery connected the convent with the hospital. They had charge of the linen, the accounts, and the nursing in the female wards. For several generations they had not been allowed to take charge of the men's wards; but while I was at Florence a change took place; and principally through the benevolent exertions of two eminent physicians, Professor Cipriani and Dr. Barillai, the men's wards also were placed under female management. I was a witness to the trembling anxiety — almost consternation — with which these good, simple-minded nuns undertook their new task,

I was long enough at Florence to see the change working well; the Sisters, full of new interest and animation, thinking the men, on the whole, more manageable than the women; and the men, full of gratitude, rejoicing in their neat apartments, their well-served meals, and all those nameless appliances which female aid administered.

The origin of the Béguines, so well known in Flanders, is uncertain; but they seem to have existed as hospital sisters in the seventh century, and to have been settled in communities at Liege and elsewhere in 1178. They wear a particular dress (the black gown, and white hood) but take no vows, and may leave the community at any time, — a thing which rarely happens.

No one who has travelled in Flanders, visited Ghent, Bruges, Brussels, or indeed any of the Netherlandish towns, will forget the singular appearance of these, sometimes young and handsome, but always staid, respectable-looking women, walking about protected by the universal reverence of the people, and busied in their compassionate vocation. In their few moments of leisure the Béguines are allowed to make lace and cultivate flowers, and they act under a strict self-constituted government, maintained by strict traditional forms. All the hospitals in Flanders are served by these Béguines. They have besides, attached to their houses, hospitals of their own, with a medical staff of physicians and surgeons, under whose direction, in all cases of difficulty, the sisters administer relief; and of the humility, skill, and tenderness with which they do administer it, I have never heard but one opinion*; nor did I ever meet with anyone who had travelled in those countries who did not wish that some system of the kind could be transferred to England.

* Howard mentions them with due praise, as serving in their hospital at Bruges. "There are twenty of them; they look very healthy: they rise at four, and are constantly employed about their numerous patients." "They prepare as well as administer the medicines. The Directress of the Pharmacy last year celebrated her jubilee or fiftieth year of her residence in the hospital." (P. 149.)

A recent traveller mentions their hospital of St. John at Bruges as one of the best conducted he had ever met with. "Its attendants, in their religious costume and with their nuns' head-dresses, moving about with a quiet tenderness and solicitude, worthy their name as 'Sisters of Charity;' and the lofty wards, with the white linen of the beds, present in every particular an example of the most accurate neatness and cleanliness."

In the fifteenth century (about 1443), when Flanders was under the dominion of the Dukes of Burgundy, a few of the Béguines were summoned from Bruges to Beaune to take charge of the great hospital founded there by Rollin, the Chancellor of Philip the Good. They were soon joined by others from the neighbouring districts, and this community of nurses obtained the name of *Sœurs de Sainte Marthe*, Sisters of St. Martha. It is worth notice that Martha, who is represented in Scripture as troubled about household cares, while her sister Mary "sat at the feet of Jesus, and heard his words," was early chosen as the patroness of those who, instead of devoting themselves to a cloistered life of prayer and contemplation, were bound by a religious obligation to active secular duties. The hospital of Beaune, one of the most extensive and best managed in France, is still served by these sisters. Many hospitals in the South of France, and three at Paris, are served by the same community.

In Germany, the Sisters of Charity are styled "Sisters of St. Elizabeth," in honour of that benevolent enthusiast, Elizabeth of Hungary, whose pathetic story and beautiful legend have been rendered familiar to us by Mr. Kingsley's drama. When Joseph II. suppressed the nunneries throughout Austria and Flanders, the Elizabethan Sisters, as well as the Béguines, were excepted by an especial decree, "because of the usefulness of their vocation." At Vienna, a few years ago, I had the opportunity, through the kindness of a distinguished physician, of visiting one of the houses of these Elizabethan Sisters.—There was an hospital attached to it of fifty beds, which had received about 450 patients during the year. Nothing could exceed the propriety, order, and cleanliness of the whole establishment. On the ground-floor was an extensive "Pharmacie," a sort of Apothecaries' Hall; part of this was divided off by a long table or counter, and surrounded by shelves filled with drugs, much like an apothecary's shop; behind the counter two Sisters, with their sleeves tucked up, were busy weighing and compounding medicines, with such a delicacy, neatness, and exactitude as women use in these matters. A physician and surgeon, appointed by the Government, visited this hospital, and were resorted to in cases of difficulty or where operations were necessary. Here was

another instance in which men and women worked together harmoniously and efficiently. Howard, in describing the principal hospital at Lyons, which he praises for its excellent and kindly management, as being "so clean and so quiet," tells us that at that time (1776), he found it attended by nine physicians and surgeons, and managed by twelve Sisters of Charity. "There were Sisters who made up, as well as administered, all the medicines prescribed; for which purpose there was a laboratory and apothecary's shop, the neatest and most elegantly fitted up that can be conceived." *

I must notice, with due respect and admiration, another female community, also especially excepted by an Imperial decree when other religious orders were suppressed, and for the same reason;—the Ursulines. We may smile at the childish and melancholy legend of St. Ursula and her eleven thousand virgins, and at the skulls heaped up in a certain mouldy tawdry chapel at Cologne; but of the Ursulines, as a community, we may be allowed to think seriously and even reverently. Their peculiar vocation was the care and instruction of poor children. They had their infant and ragged schools long before we had thought of them. Even from time immemorial there had existed, as we have seen, numerous communities of women to nurse and to pray; and there were isolated instances of women in the higher ranks extraordinarily pious and learned; but a community especially to take charge of children, to teach, to educate, and prepare and train teachers, was not known in Christendom till the institution of the Ursuline Sisters in 1537. This originated in Brescia. Angela da Brescia, a woman of birth and fortune, lost at an early age and in a painful manner, a young sister, to whom she was tenderly attached. At first her sorrow took refuge in prayer, seclusion, and pilgrimages, after the fashion of that time. It then took another form, and for the sake of her lost sister she devoted herself to the charitable work of collecting and educating poor female children.

* Howard also mentions the hospitals belonging to the order of Charity, in all countries, as the best regulated, the cleanest, the most tenderly served and managed of all he had met with. He mentions the introduction of iron bedsteads into one of their hospitals as something new to him. (In 1776.)

It is touching, it is sadly significant, to see how often the beneficent tendencies of women have, when acted out, taken their especial form from some deep domestic sorrow, or some strong bias of the affections. I could mention several examples I have known, where love or grief had thus modified the element of charity.

The institution of Angela da Brescia was the first of its kind; and so unheard of at this time was the attempt of women to organise a systematic education for their own sex, that when Françoise de Saintonge undertook to found such an establishment at Dijon, she was hooted in the streets, and her father called together four doctors learned in the law, "*pour s'assurer qu'instruire des femmes n'était pas un œuvre du démon.*" Even after he had given his consent, he was afraid to countenance his daughter; and Françoise, unprotected, unaided, began her first community of Ursulines in a garret with five poor children. Twelve years afterwards she was almost carried in triumph through the streets of Dijon, bells ringing, flowers strewed in her path. She had succeeded, and the Church took her under its wing; and with that far-sighted wisdom which Lord Macaulay has pointed out as so characteristic, at once appropriated her and her good works.*

These educational institutions multiplied during the next two hundred years, that is, down to the middle of the last century. The Ursuline Sisters behaved admirably during the French Revolution, and though dispersed and their

* Speaking of the Church of Rome, he says:—"Even for female agency there is a place in her system. To devout women she assigns spiritual functions, dignities, and magistracies. In our country, if a noble lady is moved by more than ordinary zeal for the propagation of religion, the chance is, though she may disapprove of no one doctrine or ceremony of the Established Church, she will end by giving her name to a new schism. If a pious and benevolent woman enter the cells of a prison, to pray with the most unhappy and degraded of her own sex, she does so without any authority from the Church; no line of action is traced for her, and it is well if the ordinary does not complain of her intrusion, and if the bishop does not shake his head at such irregular benevolence. At Rome, the Countess of Huntingdon would have a place in the calendar as Saint Selina, and Mrs. Fry would be foundress and first superior of the blessed Order of Sisters of the Jails."

In this country permission has been lately obtained for a few benevolent ladies to visit in a few workhouses. The "line of action" has been traced out for them rigidly—not by the Church, not by any authority legislative or judicial, but by the Poor Law Guardians, one of whom in the town where I write this is a chimney sweeper.

houses suppressed, they followed their vocation, and by collecting and teaching the poor orphans of massacred parents, and assisting the village Curés, they prevented a mass of evil. As soon as order was restored they were reinstated, but their establishments have not since increased in number. The extension of secular schools in France and Germany, and the popularity of the Sisters of Mercy, who unite the educational duties of the Ursulines with those of the Hospitalières, have in some degree superseded them. I have, however, visited several of the Ursuline houses; and I remember one in particular which I visited five and twenty years ago. To reach the school, where more than 300 children were assembled, I had to pass through a room in which about sixty infants were lying in cradles or on mattresses, while two of the sisterhood were going about with pap, and stilling as well as they could the incessant whimpering and squealing;—it was an absurd and yet a pathetic scene. These were babies left by poor women who had gone to their daily work and were to return for them in the afternoon; and this plan has since been imitated in the admirable charity of "*Les Crèches*," instituted at Paris, and similar charities in this country.*

Now I do not say that the education given by those good Sisters was the best possible—far from it. It did not go much beyond the a, b, c, the Catechism, and a little needle-work, but it was not worse than that which many of our dame schools afforded fifty years ago; and it established as a principle that women might be permitted to teach as well as to learn;—a principle so familiar to us in these days, that we quite forget to look back to a period when it was a strange unheard-of novelty, and had to do battle against prejudices, both of the clergy and the people.

It can easily be imagined that institutions like these, composed of such various ingredients, spread over such various countries and over several centuries of time, should have been subject to the influences of time; though from a deep-seated principle of vitality and necessity they seem to have escaped its vicissitudes, for they did not change in character or purpose, far less perish. That in ages of

* Since this was written, an Infant Nursery on the same principle has been added to that excellent institution, the Hospital for Sick Children, in Great Ormond Street.

superstition they should have been superstitious, that in ages of ignorance they should have been ignorant,—debased in evil selfish times, by some alloy of selfishness and cupidity,—in all this there is nothing to surprise us; but one thing does seem remarkable. While the men who professed the healing art were generally astrologers and alchemists, dealing in charms and nativities,—lost in dreams of the Elixir Vitæ and the Philosopher's Stone, and in such mummeries and quackeries as made them favourite subjects for comedy and satire,—these simple Sisters, in their hospitals, were accumulating a vast fund of practical and traditional knowledge in the treatment of disease, and the uses of various remedies;—knowledge which was turned to account and condensed into rational theory and sound method, when in the 16th century Surgery and Medicine first rose to the rank of experimental sciences and were studied as such. The poor Hospitalières knew nothing of Galen and Hippocrates, but they could observe if they could not describe, and prescribe if they could not demonstrate. Still, in the course of time great abuses had certainly crept into these religious societies,—not so bad or so flagrant, perhaps, as those which disgraced within a recent period many of our own incorporated charities,—but bad enough, and vitiating, if not destroying, their power to do good. The funds were sometimes misappropriated, the novices ill-trained for their work, the superiors careless, the Sisters mutinous, the treatment of the sick remained rude and empirical. Women of sense and feeling, who wished to enrol themselves in these communities, were shocked and discouraged by such a state of things. A reform became absolutely necessary.

This was brought about, and very effectually, about the middle of the seventeenth century.

Louise de Marillac—better known as Madame Legras, when left a widow in the prime of life, could find, like Angela da Brescia, no better refuge from sorrow than in active duties, undertaken “for the love of God.” She desired to join the Hospitalières, and was met at the outset by difficulties, and even horrors, which would have extinguished a less ardent vocation, a less determined will. She set herself to remedy the evils, instead of shrinking from them. She was assisted and encouraged in her good work;

by a man endued with great ability and piety, enthusiasm equal, and moral influence even superior, to her own. This was the famous Vincent de Paul, who had been occupied for years with a scheme to reform thoroughly the prisons and the hospitals of France. In Madame Legras he found a most efficient coadjutor. With her charitable impulses and religious enthusiasm, she united qualities not always, not often, found in union with them: a calm and patient temperament, and that administrative faculty, indispensable in those who are called to such privileged work. She was particularly distinguished by a power of selecting and preparing the instruments, and combining the means, through which she was to carry out her admirable purpose. With Vincent de Paul and Madame Legras was associated another person, Madame Goussaut, who besieged the Archbishop of Paris till what was refused to reason was granted to importunity, and they were permitted to introduce various improvements into the administration of the hospitals. Vincent de Paul and Louise Legras succeeded at last in constituting, not on a new, but on a renovated basis, the order of Hospitalières, since known as the Sisterhood of Charity. A lower class of sisters were trained to act under the direction of the more intelligent and educated women. Within twenty years this new community had two hundred houses and hospitals; in a few years more it had spread over all Europe. Madame Legras died in 1660. Already before her death the women prepared and trained under her instructions, and under the direction of Vincent de Paul (and here we have another instance of the successful *communion of labour*), had proved their efficiency on some extraordinary occasions. In the campaigns of 1652 and 1658 they were sent to the field of battle, in groups of two and four together, to assist the wounded. They were invited into the besieged towns to take charge of the military hospitals. They were particularly conspicuous at the siege of Dunkirk, and in the military hospitals established by Anne of Austria at Fontainebleau. When the plague broke out in Poland in 1672, they were sent to direct the hospitals at Warsaw, and to take charge of the orphans, and were thus introduced into Eastern Europe; and, stranger than all! they were even sent to the prison-infirmaries where the branded *forçats* and condemned felons lay cursing

and writhing in their fetters. This was a mission for Sisters of Charity which may startle the refined, or confined, notions of Englishwomen in the nineteenth century. It is not, I believe, generally known in this country that the same experiment has been lately tried, and with success, in the prisons of Piedmont, where the Sisters were first employed to nurse the wretched criminals perishing with disease and despair; afterwards, and during convalescence, to read to them, to teach them to read and to knit, and in some cases to sing. The hardest of these wretches had probably some remembrance of a mother's voice and look thus recalled, or he could at least feel gratitude for sympathy from a purer higher nature. As an element of reformation, I might almost say of regeneration, this use of the feminine influence has been found efficient where all other means had failed.

Howard—well named the Good—when inquiring into the state of prisons, about the middle of the last century, found many of those in France, bad as they generally were, far superior to those in our own country; and he attributes it to the employment and intervention of women “in a manner,” he says, “which had no parallel in England.” In Paris, he tells us, there were religious women “authorised to take care that the sick prisoners were properly attended to; and who furnished the felons in the dungeons with clean linen and medicine, and performed kind offices to the prisoners in general.” “The provincial jails, also, have charitable patronesses, *who take care that the prisoners be not defrauded of their allowance*, and procure them farther relief.” This, you will observe, was at a period when in England felons, debtors, and untried prisoners were dying by inches of filth and disease and despair. No doubt we have much improved since then, but not so much as we ought to have done.

A late writer observes that “it is astonishing and mortifying to consider how little progress the British legislature has made beyond adopting tardily, partially, and in a vacillating spirit, the improvements suggested seventy-nine years ago by Howard.”* The striking remarks and suggestions in respect to the influence of women in some of the

* Combe “On the Principles of Criminal Legislation,” &c.

hospitals and prisons abroad, which abound in Howard's works, do not seem to have been noticed or taken into account at all,—not even by the author of the excellent treatise from which I quote.

It appears to be substantiated by the united testimony of some of the greatest medical authorities among us—by such men as Brodie, Clark, Holland, Owen, Forbes, Conolly, and Carpenter,—prefixed to the above-named treatise, that “criminal legislation and prison discipline will never attain to a scientific, consistent, practical, and efficient character until they have become based on physiology of the brain and nervous system,” or, as it is elsewhere expressed, “while the influence of organism on the dispositions and capacities of men continues to be ignored.” Then have we not to consider, as a next step, *what* is to influence the organism? Have we not to consider whether there may not exist organic influences arising out of contrasted yet harmonious organisms,—mutual influences which God has contemplated in those sacred and universal relations which bind his creation together, and which we ought reverently to use for good, instead of allowing pernicious quacks and sensualists most irreligiously to misuse and abuse for evil?

It is difficult to believe in “invincible pertinacity in evil.” Nevertheless, it does seem that there are some few miserable creatures who are, in respect to the moral organisation, what idiots are in respect to intellect. We know, however, that a large proportion of the convicts in our prisons, and the sick in our hospitals, and the outcasts in our workhouses are unhappy beings, who have never been brought into contact with goodness elevated by the religious principle, softened by the spirit of love, and refined by habitual gentleness and modesty; and we seem in these matters to be in such constant fear of doing mischief, that we have no courage to do good. We stand in such a dastardly terror of the ridicule which follows mistake or failure, that we ought to die of inward shame, while thus entrenching ourselves in the negative good, instead of bravely meeting the positive evil. The hardest thing which visitors of prisons have to contend with in the wretched delinquents, is not so much the propensity to evil as the ignorance of, and disbelief in, goodness; on men.

of this stamp and on young offenders, judicious female influence would probably have effect where men in authority, though not less well intentioned and equally judicious, arouse only feelings of suspicion, sullenness, and resistance.

From recent inquiries I learn that the system of employing Sisters of Charity as visitors in the prisons of Piedmont continues to work well, and that none of the evils which might have been apprehended have in any instance occurred. But supposing they *had* occurred; a hundred mistakes and failures at the outset could not invalidate the principle that what had once succeeded on a large scale would, under similar conditions, again succeed: that the expedient of bringing the female mind and temperament to bear on the masculine brain (and of course *vice versa*), as a physical and moral resource, might be worth a thought, being in accordance with that law of nature or Divine ordinance which placed the two sexes under mutual and sympathetic influences; not always, as the stupid and profligate suppose, for evil and temptation, but for good and for healing; not in one or two relations of life, but in every possible relation in which they can be approximated. This suggestion I merely throw out here as not unworthy of the consideration of our physicians, moralists, and legislators. I leave it to them and to time, and I proceed.

At the commencement of the French Revolution the Sisterhood of Charity had 426 houses in France, and many more in other countries; the whole number of women then actively employed was about 6000. During the Reign of Terror, the superior (Madame Duleau), who had become a Sister of Charity at the age of nineteen and was now sixty, endeavoured to keep the society together, although suppressed by the government; and in the midst of the horrors of that time—when so many nuns and ecclesiastics perished miserably—it appears that the feeling of the people protected these women, and I do not learn that any of them suffered public or personal outrage. As soon as the Consular government was established, the indispensable Sisterhood was recalled by a decree of the Minister of the Interior.

I cannot resist giving you a few passages from the preamble to this edict—certainly very striking and significant—as I

find it quoted in a little book on "Hospitals and Sisterhoods" now before me.

It begins thus :—

"Seeing that the services rendered to the sick can only be properly administered by those whose vocation it is, and who do it in the spirit of love;—

"Seeing, farther, that among the hospitals of the Republic those are in all ways best served wherein the female attendants have adhered to the noble example of their predecessors, whose only object was to practise a boundless love and charity;—

"Seeing that the members still existing of this society are now growing old, so that there is reason to fear that an order which is a glory to the country may shortly become extinct;—

"It is decreed that the Citoyenne Dulcau, formerly Superior of the Sisters of Charity, is authorised to educate girls for the care of the hospitals," &c.

I confess I should like to see an Act of our Parliament beginning with such a preamble! Yes! I should like to see an Act of our Parliament beginning with a recognition that women do exist as a part of the community, whose responsibilities are to be acknowledged, and whose capabilities are to be made available, not separately, but conjointly with those of men. For that surely must be a defective legislation which takes for granted only the crimes, the vices, the mistakes of humanity, and makes no account of its virtues, its affections, and its capabilities.

The whole number of women included in these charitable orders was, in the year 1848, at least twelve thousand. They seem to have a quite marvellous ubiquity. I have myself met with them not only at Paris, Vienna, Milan, Turin, Genoa, but at Montreal, Quebec, and Detroit; on the confines of civilisation; in Ireland, where cholera and famine were raging;—everywhere, from the uniform dress and a certain similarity in the placid expression and quiet deportment, looking so like each other, that they seemed, whenever I met them, to be but a multiplication of one and the same person. In all the well-trained Sisters of Charity I have known, whether Protestant or Roman Catholic, I have found a mingled bravery and tenderness, if not by nature,

by habit; and a certain tranquil self-complacency, arising not from self-applause, but out of that very abnegation of self which had been adopted as the rule of life.

I have now given you a rapid and most imperfect sketch of what has been done by an organised system of charity in the Roman Catholic church.

I am no friend to nunneries. I do not like even the idea of Protestant nunneries, which I have heard discussed warmly advocated. I conceive that any large number of women shut up together in one locality, with no occupation connecting them actively and benevolently with the world of humanity outside, with all their interests centred within their walls, would not mend each other, and that such an atmosphere could not be perfectly healthy,—spiritually morally, or physically. There would necessarily ensue, in lighter characters, frivolity, idleness, and sick disordered fancies; and in superior minds, ascetic pride, gloom, and impatience. But it is very different with the active contemplative Orders, and I should certainly like to see amongst some institutions which, if not exactly like them, should supply their place.*

In speaking on the subject with intelligent and experienced men and women, I have generally met with the strongest sympathy; but sometimes also with the very sweeping objection, that such communities are quite contrary to the spirit of the Reformed Church, and among Protestants quite impracticable. The worse for us, if it were true, but is it true?

The experiment *has* been tried, an attempt *has* been made, to found such an institution in a Protestant community, though not in this country; it has not yet stood the test of centuries, but let us see what has been done within a period of thirty years.

At Kaiserswerth on the Rhine, a small town near Düsseldorf, a manufactory had been established during the war, in which the workmen employed were almost all Protestants. In 1822 the manufacturer became bankrupt and the workmen were reduced to poverty. The pastor Mr. Fliedner, then a very young man, travelled through Holland and England to collect from sympathising friends the

* Since this was written in 1855 a commencement has been made.

necessary funds to support a church in his small parish. In this, we are told, he fully succeeded, and, it is added, "this was the smallest part of the result of his journey." While in England he became acquainted with Mrs. Fry. It was the meeting of two most congenial minds, and his attention was at once turned to the objects which then occupied her. On his return home he originated at Dusseldorf the first society in Germany for the improvement of prison discipline. Experience in prisons pointed out to him some ways of doing good which came within his then small means. He had been struck with compassion for the desolate condition of women who, when discharged from prison, already depraved by bad habits and without the means of subsistence, "are in a manner forced back into crime." With one female criminal, and one voluntary assistant, he founded his penitentiary in a little summer-house in a garden. This was in 1833. In the following year he met with a second volunteer assistant, and collected together nine more penitents, of whom eight had been more than once in prison. This part of the institution, memorable as the first beginning of an establishment, which has since extended to so many and various branches, has always been kept entirely separate from the rest. A general hospital, a lunatic asylum, an orphan asylum, an infant school, became so many seminaries for training hospital nurses, teachers (*i. e.* instructing sisters), and visitors of the poor (called parish deaconesses). On these I do not dwell at present, for we must confine ourselves to the theme in hand. It is the hospital at Kaiserswerth which constitutes the most important part of the establishment, and is likely to be the most extensive and permanent in its effects.

In 1836 Mr. Fliedner established his hospital in the deserted manufactory. He had been led to think of it partly from the want of good nurses for the sick; partly from regret, as he said himself, to see "how much good female power was wasted;" partly from a perception that the women who had voluntarily come forward to assist him required a larger sphere for the exercise of their faculties. He began, as usual, humbly enough—with one patient and one nurse. Within the first year the number of voluntary nurses was seven, and the number of patients received and nursed was sixty, besides twenty-eight nursed at their own

houses. The hospital contained in 1854, 120 beds, which were generally full, and more than 6,000 patients have been received since its commencement.

But the chief purpose of this hospital is to serve as a training-school for nursing sisters. Every one who offers herself (and there is no want of offers) is taken on trial for six months, during which she must pay for her board, and wears no distinctive dress. If she persists in her vocation and is accepted, she undergoes a further probation (like the novitiate of the Roman-Catholic Sisters) of from one to three years. She then puts on the hospital dress, and is boarded and lodged gratis. The male wards are served by men-nurses, of whom there are five, who have been educated in the hospital, and are under the authority of the Sisters. They sleep in the male wards, and sit up in case of need. It is added that "the most fastidious could find nothing to object to in the intercourse which takes place between patients, surgeon, and Sisters."

As no inducement is offered to these Protestant Sisters any more than in the Catholic Orders, no prospect of pecuniary reward, or praise, or reputation, nothing in short but the opportunity of working for the sake of God and humanity, so, if this does not appear sufficient for them, they are dismissed. After they have been accepted and made their profession, they receive yearly a small sum for clothing, and nothing more; they can receive no fee or reward from those they serve, but in age or illness the parent institution is bound to receive and provide for them.

A certain number of these Sisters obtain a particular education to fit them for parish visitors. The absolute necessity that women should be especially trained in order to make good and efficient parish visitors is apparent; for it is wonderfully, and often pathetically, absurd to see what a large stock of goodness and conscientious anxiety, and what a small stock of experience, knowledge, and sympathy with their objects, some excellent women set off on their task as lady visitors of the poor. A number of the Sisters, trained properly, have been sent to distant towns and villages, at the request of clergymen and visiting societies. Others are occupied in nursing in private families, their services being repaid to the parent institution.

Let me add that Miss Florence Nightingale went through

a regular course of training at Kaiserswerth, before she took charge of the Female Sanitarium in London.

In imitation of this establishment, a similar institution for the training of Protestant nurses and teachers has been opened at Paris; another at Strasbourg; another at Berlin. A similar establishment was founded at Dresden by the late excellent and amiable Countess Alfred Hohenthal (*née* Princess Biron), in which twenty-one women are under a course of instruction. There are besides ten other institutions which I find described as existing in different localities, but all emanating from the same origin, and containing in 1855 not less than 429 members. Since that time the number has at least trebled, and there are charitable houses belonging to this community at Constantinople, Smyrna, and Jerusalem, besides those in Germany, France, England, and America; so that they bid fair to emulate the sisters of St. Vincent de Paul in number and usefulness.

When I was last in Paris I witnessed the reception of two ladies into the order of Protestant deaconesses, after a laborious novitiate of two years. It was essentially a religious ceremony, and the duties were undertaken in a religious spirit: they did not absolutely "take vows," as it is called, but entered into a solemn contract to serve faithfully for two years; they were then at liberty to dissolve or renew the contract. Similar institutions are springing up everywhere in England—"Homes" they are called—in which charity is administered by sisters taking various appellations, and aiming at various purposes. In some of these institutions I have found a small infirmary for sick women and children; a small school for the girls of the neighbourhood; an infant-school; a day-nursery (*Crèche*), where mothers employed as charwomen, &c., might deposit their infants for a few hours, paying a very small sum; the whole well managed under religious influences on a small scale, and the smaller the better, the more like a *family*.

It is then no longer a question as to whether, in Protestant communities, a number of women *can* be properly trained and organised for purposes of social benefit, authorised and employed by the Government, aided and directed by intelligent and good men, and sustained by public opinion. I consider that the question has been answered; and I must repeat my strong conviction, that such a com-

munion of labour and of love as I have endeavoured to describe is not a thing of country, creed, or custom, but is founded in the very laws of our being,—in that selfsame law which is the basis of domestic life; that it is one of the main conditions of social happiness and morals; and that the neglect of it in any country or community strikes at the heart of all that is best in men and women, increases the faults of both and their ignorance of each other, and tends consequently to the ultimate degradation and misery of all society.

For intelligible reasons I made no reference in this lecture, in its original form, to what has been considered as the particular province of all Sisters of Charity deserving the name,—the management of Penitentiaries and Houses of Refuge for the erring and the fallen of their own sex. I shall merely observe that there is no department of active benevolence requiring more careful preparation and more especial instruction than this. The treatment of women whose habitual existence has been a perpetual outrage of their nature, *must* be special and exceptional; and I do not think that this is always well understood by the excellent and virtuous ladies who undertake to manage these scarcely manageable creatures. They are thought to be mentally and morally depraved, when in fact it is often the complete derangement of the nervous system, brought on by vice and disease, which produces those changeful moods, those fits of sullenness, excitability, obtuseness, insolence, and desperation by which I have seen the most benevolent filled with disgust and the most hopeful with despondency. I believe it to be true that women, even from the superior delicacy of the moral and physical organisation, can be more thoroughly, hopelessly, and constitutionally vitiated than men; this I have often heard urged as an argument for rejecting and punishing them when bad, never for protecting and sparing them when good. Such forms of malady in such sacrificed creatures are best treated in the country, by avoiding too much sedentary employment, by active exercise and really hard work in the open air, by talking to them and suffering them to talk as little as possible of themselves, and by gradually opening the mind to religious impressions without exciting resistance or despondency. No mere impulse of pity, no mere power of

will, can enable any one to undertake this most difficult mission, which ought to combine the vocation of charity with some of the qualifications of a physician.

Since the above was written (early in 1855), there have been strange revelations on this most painful subject openly published and discussed. The newspapers tell us that the cry is for "Refuges," which indeed are rising up in all directions. There are twelve in London and the neighbourhood under one Society only*, besides many others in every large provincial town. Meetings are held; the Bishops of London, Oxford, St. David's, and the influential rectors of Marylebone and St. James's, make eloquent appeals to "pious ladies," tenderly nurtured and brought up amid all the guarded sanctities of home,—ladies "of birth, position, and refinement," † who could not some years ago have supposed the existence of outcasts of their own sex, or of vicious excesses on the part of the other, without an imputation on their feminine decorum. A woman, urged by clerical and philanthropic friends, lends herself gladly to this work of mercy; but can these dreadful revelations be brought within range of her active charities—make a part of her experience—without producing a feeling of disgust and indignation, as well as of pain and pity? Is her reverence for the men around her, her faith in the superior strength and higher qualities of those she is called upon to love, honour, and obey, increased or diminished, when a terrible significance is given to terms once lightly used, and sins once lightly glanced at? I know nothing more horrible than the attempts which have been made to sentimentalise vice. We talk of "fallen women;" but for the far greater number there is no *fall*; they just, like blind creatures, walk from the darkness of ignorance into the foulness of sin. They are starving, and they sell themselves for food. What a spectacle for chaste Sisters of Mercy, and gentle anxious mothers with sons and daughters just entering into life! Are they the better or the worse for it?

But it will be said, perhaps, that even in these painful revelations may lie the seed of ultimate good. Men are awakening up to an uneasy suspicion that society is begin-

* The Church Penitentiary Society, with a council of thirteen bishops and about seventy other gentlemen, members of parliament and others.

† See the Bishop of London's Charge, p. 116.

ning to have a conscience in these matters,—that they may possibly sink in the estimation of the woman they may wish to please,—may lose their manly prestige in her eyes, and be vulgarised to her imagination, when once the veil is withdrawn.

It is, I suppose, from some such instinctive alarm that we owe the sneering attacks lately made on refuges for "fallen women," and the ladies who patronise them; attacks of which those who pen them ought to be ineffably ashamed.

The fact is, however, (and God knows, men have little reason to mock at it!) that now and then one wretched creature out of hundreds may be saved or reclaimed, and where shall we look for prevention? Where but to our clergy, our schoolmasters, our physicians? With them it rests, not with us.

WORK AT HOME.

LET us now look at home, and consider what has been done in our own country. Is there any hope, any possibility, of organising into some wise and recognised system the talent and energy, the piety and tenderness, of our women for the good of the whole community?

The subject becomes one of awful importance when we consider, that in the last census of 1851, there appears an excess of the female over the male population of Great Britain of more than half a million, the proportion being 104 women to every 100 men. How shall we employ this superfluity of the "feminine element" in society, how turn it to good and useful purposes, instead of allowing it to run to waste? Take of these 500,000 superfluous women only the one hundredth part, say 5,000 women, who are willing to work for good, to join the communion of labour, under a directing power, if only they knew how—if only they could *learn* how—best to do their work, and if employment were open to them, what a phalanx it would be if properly organised!

Everywhere I find the opinion of thoughtful and intelligent men corroborative of my own observations and conclusions. In spite of the adverse feeling of "*that other public*, to which *we*, the sensible reflecting public, are not

in the least degree related," * — in spite of routine and prejudice,—the feeling of those who in the long run will lead opinion is for us. They say, "In all our national institutions we want the help of women. In our hospitals, prisons, lunatic asylums, workhouses, reformatory schools, elementary schools,—everywhere we want efficient women, and none are to be found prepared or educated for our purpose." The men whom I have heard speak thus seem to regard this infusion of a superior class of working women into our public institutions as a new want, a new expedient. They do not seem to feel, or recognise, the profound truth, that the want now so generally felt and acknowledged arises out of a great unacknowledged law of the Creator, a law old as creation itself, which makes the moral health of the community to depend on the co-operation of woman in all work that concerns the well-being of man. For, as I have said before, it is not in one or two relations, but in all the possible relations of life, in which men and women are concerned, that they must work together for mutual improvement and the general good; and I return to the principle laid down at first, "the communion of love and the communion of labour." †

* *v. Household Worlds*, vol. xi. No. 254.

† Since this lecture was delivered I find the following passage in a paper on "Municipal Government," published by the Manchester Statistical Society:—

"In carrying out these and various other objects of importance, I am persuaded that the agency of the female sex is necessary, and that without the well organised aid of benevolent and educated women, municipal government will ever remain limited and imperfect. I do not contemplate the formal election of females to municipal offices, although this would appear from 'Grant on Corporations,' not to be without precedent in England, where women, we know, are still, *by Law*, eligible as overseers of the poor, and capable of filling the highest office in the kingdom."

"A number of years ago, in a paper read before this Society, entitled 'Thoughts on the Excess of Adult Females in the Population of Great Britain, with reference to its Causes and Consequences,' I endeavoured to show that the female sex, in Christian countries, are probably designed for duties more in number and in importance than have yet been assigned them. The reasons were, that above the twentieth year, in all fully peopled states, whether in Europe or in North America, women considerably out-number the other sex; and that, as this excess is produced by causes which remain in steady operation, we detect therein a natural law, and may allowably infer that it exists for beneficent social ends—ends, amongst others, such as those I am attempting to explain and recommend."

"I own that I cannot but regard the population of our large towns as

"In England," (it has been truly said,) "there are no men to be found systematically trained to the moral management of convicts, such as are to be found in Germany and other countries. It is the bane of the English system of government throughout, that it does not render the public service, in its various civil departments, a series of professions, for which men must be specially educated and trained; and the great English universities, in consequence, do not educate young men for any pursuits on earth, except those of a gentleman and a scholar."* In the same manner, the education given to our women is merely calculated to render them ornamental and well-informed; but it does not train them, even those who are so inclined and fitted by nature, to be effective instruments of social improvement. Whether men, without the assistance and sympathetic approval of well-educated women, are likely to improve and elevate the moral tone of society, or work out good in any especial sphere or profession, is, I think, rather doubtful. God, who created the human race male and female, did not make human culture and progress to depend on one half of it.

I believe the employment of well-trained women in the reformatory schools for juvenile delinquents, which are to be established under a late Act of Parliament, has been

in a very unsatisfactory state; and feel persuaded that the wisest — the best devised — regulations enforced by the police alone, as is the case at present, will not succeed; but I think that a body of educated ladies for each ward, acting in concert with the legal authorities" (that is to say, men and women working together), "would be found of wonderful service in detecting radical evils, especially the sources of preventible poverty; or, what is much the same, the various temptations which beset the labourer's family, from bad laws and defective arrangements of different kinds, owing to which the amount of sickness, poverty, immorality, and unhappiness is at all times appallingly great." (*Suggestions for the Improvement of Municipal Government in populous Manufacturing Towns*, by John Robertson, published in the Transactions of the Manchester Statistical Society.—1854.)

I do not venture to give any opinion with regard to the "suggestions" here thrown out in reference to women, — for I have never thought about Municipal Government or the duties of Overseers, — but I extract the above passages as showing the ideas entertained and openly expressed by some experienced and intelligent men. (In the Charge of the Bishop of London, December 1858, the same "suggestions" are carried yet farther.)

* Combe "On the Principles of Criminal Legislation and the Practice of Prison Discipline."

already suggested. It is a great advance in opinion, that the possible good of such a measure should be spoken of in high quarters. For about ten years, perhaps, the means of carrying it out may be considered and debated; in another ten years, some plan will be proposed; and in another ten years, perhaps, adopted; for such is the usual progress of any great moral movement in "that other public,"—that self-satisfied, unreasoning, cowardly, somnolent public which we repudiate; wherein such topics are discussed with reference merely to custom and expediency, not to justice and necessity, — with reference to human laws, which can be made and unmade, not with reference to divine laws, immutable principles of life, which cannot be violated or neglected in any social community, without bringing in the elements of demoralisation and decay.

And respecting that movement in favour of the wretched children who so long infested our streets and crammed our gaols, and for whom a long delayed measure of wisdom and justice was obtained last year*, may I not be permitted to say how much that cause owed to the unceasing exertions of three ladies, true "sisters of charity," who, to my knowledge, have been occupied in this good work for twenty years? With regard to the first of these ladies, her attention was early called to the subject, and she never ceased to advocate, and, I may say, to agitate the theme. She moved in high society; she was nobly born and connected, eloquent, and clever, and lively; and she made use of all these advantages to promote the settled purpose of her mind. She failed in some attempts to execute plans of reform without the legislative sanction, but she was not discouraged. She attacked Home Secretaries, and she plagued magistrates; no M.P. was safe from her, no Minister of State. Like the woman in Scripture who persecuted the unjust judge, she made herself listened to by her "much speaking," and at length *leavened* the society in which she moved with her own feelings, her own hopes, her own faith. The second lady I refer to, was one who carried out into action, and tested by practical experience, and illustrated by published documents, by well-digested facts, and eloquent reasoning, the truths which her sister in beneficence had advocated. Need I name Mary Car-

penter—a name publicly and inseparably connected with the cause? When called up before a Committee of the House of Commons, her evidence was so clear, so conclusive, and given with such self-possession and precision, as well as feminine feeling, that I have heard those who were present express their admiration,—their conviction that the testimony and the arguments of this excellent woman had, in fact, turned the scale. The third lady I will not name. She not only brought to the question a noble and powerful intellect, but she invested in it a portion of her affections—a part of her very heart; she gave it all the advantages of her character and position; and she had wealth which enabled her to purchase and pay well for the exertions of others, their brains, their pens. In 1855, after more than twenty years had thus passed, an Act of Parliament was obtained which, however inadequate in some respects, did at least recognise the principle for which they had so long contended. God forbid that I should seek to lessen the value of the voluntary aid, the indefatigable exertions, the eloquent pleading of those wise and good men who were united in this cause, and at length succeeded in gaining it; but let me say that this was a strong instance of what I mean by the “communion of love and the communion of labour,” carried out into social public objects.

It is perfectly notorious that in the reformatory and elementary schools for boys in America, great use is made of female influence and tuition. Women were first resorted to from a scarcity of masters, and the greater cheapness of female labour. What was at first a matter of expediency and necessity, has since become matter of choice, for the experiment has been crowned with success, and has been productive of far more good than was at first contemplated; and I believe that in the Schools or Houses of Detention contemplated here under the new Act of Parliament, for young delinquents, the teaching and influence of well-trained gentlewomen, invested with an official authority, might exercise incalculable good. “I can manage any number of naughty boys,” said a lady who is celebrated among us as a Protestant Sister of Charity on a large scale, “no matter how wicked and mutinous. I *feel* that I have the power to subdue them; but I confess I have great difficulty with girls,—I do not know why.” The cause, if

we looked to Nature and her wise adaptations, would not be far to seek,*

With regard to the employment of women in the lunatic asylums, I can only say that I have the testimony of men of large experience, that feminine aid, influence, presence, would in many cases be most beneficial in the male wards.†

* I have heard of a lady now (or very lately) residing near Harvard University, "who, amid the duties and cares of her own household, fitted many young men for those colleges which neither she nor any of her sex were, as students, ever allowed to enter. For twenty years this lady had been accustomed to receive under her roof those students of the University who were rusticated for various offences; and, while kneading her bread or plying her needle, she assisted them in their classical studies, and mended their manners at the same time."

It is well known that one of the best and most popular teachers of navigation and nautical mathematics and astronomy in England is a lady—Mrs. Janet Taylor; that her classes are celebrated, and numerous attended by men who have been at sea, as well as by youths preparing for the merchant service.

† Of the Salpêtrière, Howard says, that, at the time of his visit (1776), the whole house "was kept clean and quiet by the great attention of the religious women who served it; but it was terribly crowded, containing more than 6000 poor, sick, and insane persons."

He describes the Hospital "des Incurables" at Paris, containing 400 aged and infirm persons, as admirably served and managed by forty Sisters.

Again:—"Here (at Ghent) is a foundation belonging to the Béguines for the reception of twelve men who are insane, and for sick and aged women. The insane have, when requisite, assistance from their own sex; and the tenderness with which both these and the poor women are treated by the Sisters, gave me no little pleasure." (Howard "On Prisons," p. 145.)

"A principal reason of the cleanliness and order of the workhouses in Holland, is the attention and humanity of the governesses, for each house has four, who take charge of the inspection, and have their names painted in the room." (Howard "On Prisons," 3d edition, 1784, p. 48.)

"The workhouses at Amsterdam were under the direction of six regents (governors) and four governesses, who appointed under them two 'fathers,' and two 'mothers' (overseers), whose business it was to superintend the work, diet, and lodging of the inmates," &c. (p. 59.)

"The regents (i. e., governors of the houses of correction), have a room in which they assemble once a fortnight. Their ladies assemble in another room to give directions concerning the week's linen, provisions, &c."

"They (the governesses) also attend by rotation at dinner and at other times, and their accounts are carried to the regents."

In these days the *order* and *cleanliness* which Howard so admired are not wanting in our workhouses; but some elements *are* wanting, such as judicious and refined and truly religious and kind-hearted women could alone supply.

[Since the above note was written, the Workhouse Visiting Society has been instituted; but the subject of the condition of workhouses is treated more in detail in the following lecture.]

Of course there are certain cases in which it would be dangerous, inadmissible; but it is their opinion that in most cases it would have a soothing, sanitary, harmonising effect. In reference to this subject let me mention a lady with whom I have the honour to be personally acquainted. She is a native of the United States, and has given her attention for many years to the management of the insane, and the improvement of mad-houses. She has travelled alone through every part of the United States—from New York to Chicago, from New Orleans to Quebec. She has been the means of founding nineteen new asylums, and improving and enlarging a greater number. She has won those in power to listen to her, and is considered in her own country a first-rate authority on such subjects, just as Mrs. Fry was here in regard to prisons, Mrs. Chisholm in regard to emigration, and Miss Carpenter in regard to juvenile criminals. As to the use of trained women in lunatic asylums, I will say no more at present, but throw it out as a suggestion to be dealt with by physiologists, and entrusted to *time*.

With reference to the employment of women as a higher order of nurses in hospitals, late events might almost render it superfluous to speak at all, but that it is important to my present theme to look back to the history of public opinion on this subject.

I find that more than thirty years ago—long before the institution at Kaiserswerth existed or was thought of—the late Dr. Gooch entertained the idea of establishing in this country some institution analogous to that of the Sisters of Charity. Dr. Gooch is to this day a great medical authority as a physician; he was also a philanthropist and a philosopher. During a tour in Belgium he had been struck—as all are struck—by the institution of the *Béguines*, their well-ordered hospitals, and their general efficiency in visiting and prescribing for the sick poor. He corresponded with Southey on this subject, and at the end of the second volume of Southey's "*Colloquies*" may be found the ideas he had brought from the Netherlands, and communicated to his friend: also two letters published in the "*Medical Gazette*," and signed "*A Country Surgeon*," which are now known to have been written by Dr. Gooch. There is also a most eloquent exposition of Southey's own opinions,

holding up to us the example of the Béguines and the Sisters of Charity ; and, which is curious, he seems to have put his trust in Quakerism rather than in our own Church (the church which he so devoutly admired and defended) ; and he even hoped that Mrs. Opie would do for our hospitals what Mrs. Fry had done for our prisons. But he mistook the character of Mrs. Opie : it was *not* the vocation of that amiable and gifted woman.

You must permit me to read one or two passages from these letters written by Dr. Gooch in 1825, because of their beauty, and because of their good sense. He begins by describing at length the appearance and manners of the Sisters of Charity in France and Belgium ; their respectable, kindly appearance ; their peculiar yet appropriate dress ; the care, the tenderness, the skill with which they attended on the sick. He then adds :—

“ Let all real Christians join and found an order of women like the Sisters of Charity in Catholic countries : let them be selected for good plain sense, kindness of disposition, indefatigable industry, and deep piety ; let them receive—not a technical and scientific—but a practical medical education. For this purpose let them be placed both as nurses and pupils in the hospitals of Edinburgh and London, or in the county hospitals : let their attention be pointed by the attending physicians to the particular symptoms by which he distinguishes the disease ; let them be made as familiar with the best remedies (which are always few) as they are with barley-water, gruel, and beef-tea ; let them learn the rules by which these remedies are to be employed ; let them be examined frequently on these subjects, in order to see that they carry these rules clearly in their heads ; let books be framed for them containing the essential rules of practice,—briefly, clearly, and untechnically written. Let such women, thus educated, be distributed among the country parishes of the kingdom, and be maintained by parish allowance, which now goes to the parish surgeon, who should be resorted to only in difficult cases ; let them be examined every half year by competent physicians about the state of their medical knowledge. Let this be done, and I fearlessly predict that my friend, and all those who are similarly situated and zealous with himself, will no longer complain that their sick flock suffer from medical neglect.

“ It may be objected that women with such an education would form a bad substitute for a scientific medical attendance. Be it remembered, however, that the choice is not between such women and a profound and perfect physician or surgeon (if there is such a person), but between such women and the ordinary run of country apothecaries ; the latter labouring under the additional disadvantage of wanting time for the application of what skill they have.”

“ If any attempt should be made to introduce Sisters of Charity

into England, I would advise the experiment to be made at first on a small scale. They should be not mere nurses and religious instructors, but a set of religious female physicians. I would select two or three women,—not superannuated servants in search of a quiet livelihood, who are thinking of nothing but how to make money with the least trouble, and who would apply, or be recommended, in crowds for such a purpose,—but women originally and habitually of a higher order, young enough to learn, yet old enough to be sick of worldly vanities; in short, with strong sense, a good education, and something of the devotees (there are many such). I would place them in some hospital under an experienced, clear-headed, practical physician, who should explain to them in untechnical language, as they went from bed to bed, signs by which he is guided in the choice of his remedies. I would sharpen their attention and assist their memories by frequent examinations into their knowledge; always remembering that it is not safely deposited in the mind until the student can state it and apply it herself.

"This system of instruction should continue until my Sisters of Charity have acquired a readiness in detecting all ordinary diseases, in selecting the guiding symptoms, and in the use of that short list of remedies which even medical men find sufficient in pauper practice. When they are ripe for my purpose, I would (taking a hint from the *Sœurs de Charité*) station two of them in a cottage placed in the centre of some country district. I would have them maintained partly from the parish funds, partly by the voluntary subscriptions of the opulent people of the neighbourhood, and partly by those of the charitable and religious world. Their kindness and care would soon ensure the goodwill of the poor. A few cures would be followed by medical reputation, and the cottagers of the district would soon have reason to bless the hour when these useful women settled in their neighbourhood."*

This plan may appear at first sight somewhat Utopian; but is it so really? Could there be a better way of employing some of our superfluous women?

I must quote one more passage:—

"Many will think that it is impossible to impart a useful knowledge of medicine to women who are ignorant of anatomy, physiology, and pathology. A profound knowledge, of course, would not, but a very useful degree of it might: a degree which, combined with kindness and assiduity, would be far superior to that which the country poor receive at present. I have known matrons and sisters of hospitals with more practical tact in the detection and treatment of disease than half the young surgeons by whom the country poor are commonly attended."†

* See the Prefatory Letter for some remarks on the medical training of women.

† This was published in a popular medical journal, "*The Medical Gazette*."

These were the words of an eminent practical physician thirty years ago. No result followed,—scarcely was public attention awakened to the subject, and the writer went down to his last rest with a favourite idea unaccomplished.

The feeling with which the expedition of the lady-nurses to the Crimea was regarded by the lower order of medical men was exhibited in many ways not very creditable. It reminded me of what had taken place some ten or twelve years ago when the female School of Design was first projected; when a petition was drawn up and handed round for signature by a certain set of artists and engravers, praying that the women might not be taught at the expense of government "arts which would interfere with the employment of men, and take the bread out of their mouths." The men who signed and circulated this precious document were not wicked or bad-hearted. I dare say they meant well. They only took that selfish, one-sided view of the subject natural in persons who had been ill-educated, and were totally ignorant of the bearings of any large moral or social question. Of the obvious benefit such an institution might afford to their daughters or sisters, thus lightening the burthen on men with large families, they did not think;—far less on the right of every human being to the due cultivation and exercise of every good gift "that cometh from above." Had their views been listened to, how many hundreds of young women who are now maintaining themselves or helping their families, would be perishing on the streets, in prisons, in workhouses! And who would have been the better? Of the artists who signed that petition some are dead, and some whom I know would not like to be reminded of their share in it—are indeed thoroughly ashamed of it. I believe that if among medical men a petition were now handed round for signature, praying that women should not be taught at the expense of government the physical and moral conditions of health, the symptoms of disease, the preparation of the best remedies and the rules for administering them, lest they should "interfere with the employments of men, and take the bread out of their mouths,"—I am afraid there are well-intentioned and well-educated men who would at this time be induced to sign such a paper; but I believe that twenty—even ten—years hence, they would look

back upon their signatures and the whole transaction with as much disgust and amazement as is now excited by the exploded attempt to crush and sneer down the female School of Design.

As I have said, — no immediate result followed upon the suggestions of Dr. Gooch; but the good thus sown only slept, like the seed in wintry ground.

A few years ago, several intelligent and benevolent persons, men and women, who had had opportunities of studying the management of the institution at Kaiserswerth, conceived the idea that a similar institution, for similar purposes, might be founded in England, and that both our government and our clergy would be induced to co-operate in such a plan, if once public interest could be excited in its favour. It was admitted on all sides that the general management of our hospitals and charitable institutions exhibited the want of female aid, such as exists in the hospitals abroad, — the want of a moral, religious, intelligent, sympathising influence, combined with the physical cares of a common nurse. Some inquiry was made into the general character of hospital nurses, and the qualifications desired; and what were these qualifications? Obedience, presence of mind, cheerfulness, sobriety, patience, forbearance, judgment, kindness of heart, a light delicate hand, a gentle voice, a quick eye; — these were the qualities enumerated as not merely desirable, but necessary, in a good and efficient nurse — a long list of virtues not easily to be purchased for 14*l.* 10*s.* a year! — qualifications, indeed, which in their union would form an admirable woman in any class of life, and fit her for any sphere of duty, from the highest to the lowest. In general, however, the requirements of our medical men are much more limited; they consider themselves fortunate if they can ensure obedience and sobriety, without education, tenderness, intelligence, religious feeling, or any high principle of duty. On the whole, the testimony brought before us is sickening. Drunkenness, profligacy, violence of temper, horribly coarse and brutal language, — these are common. We know that there are admirable exceptions, more particularly in the great London Hospitals. But the toil is great, the duties disgusting, the pecuniary remuneration small in comparison;

so that there is nothing to invite the co-operation of a better class of women, but the highest motives which can influence a true Christian. At one moment the selfishness and irritability of the sufferers require a strong control; at another time their dejection and bodily weakness require the utmost tenderness, sympathy, and judgment. To rebuke the self-righteous, to bind up the broken-hearted, to strengthen, to comfort the feeble, to drop the words of peace into the disturbed or softened mind just at the right moment; — there are few nurses who could be entrusted with such a charge, or be brought to regard it as a part of their duty: while the "overworked chaplain," as he is called, in some of the evidence before me, cannot suffice for all, and pays his visits only at stated times, unless urgently called for.

It was from a consideration of these and other evils, and a comparison of our system with that of the Roman Catholic and Protestant Sisterhoods abroad, that a paper was drawn up and sent round to a number of chaplains, medical men, and governors of hospitals, containing a sketch of the training system adopted in the institutions at Kaiserswerth and elsewhere, and inquiries as to the best means of raising the moral character of hospital nurses by substituting women of a better class, properly instructed, and capable of being at once the delegates of the medical men, the assistants of the chaplain, the comfort, blessing, and supporter of the poor sufferers to whom they minister.

The answers which this circular elicited, twenty-three in number, were very curiously characteristic of the state of feeling and opinion on a most important subject. But, however differing in views and in character, the writers, almost without exception, agree in two things, — in testifying to the evils complained of, even to their utmost extent, and in their despair of any remedy. The so-called practical men, clergy and laity, admired the project, praised the amiable enthusiasts who advocated it, and shook their wise heads, just as they had formerly shaken them over theories of education and plans of juvenile reform.

When Admiral Sir Edward Parry was at the head of the naval hospital at Haslar, the necessity for a better order of nurses for his sick men was forced on his attention. Perhaps he had heard of the employment of the

Sisters of Charity in the naval hospitals of France *; at all events, the hope of procuring nurses of a similar character induced him to draw up a sort of appeal, in which he adverted to the *impossibility* of obtaining any attendance for the hospital inmates, but such as was of the lowest grade — such as only “the most absolute necessity would justify his admitting into the establishment.” The result was incalculable evil to the men; who, instead of being elevated and softened by suffering and seclusion, were morally lowered and hardened by contact with coarse and immoral women, even at the very moment when all that was best and manliest within them ought to have been wakened up and appealed to; and most earnestly he solicited the aid of all good Christians to induce three or four respectable women to volunteer their services, and to undergo an especial training, such as had been adopted at Kaiserswerth; then to superintend others, and thus to help him in his earnest endeavour to raise the moral tone of one of the most important of our national hospitals. The paper was signed by five medical officers, and circulated extensively. It did not elicit a single offer. “I confess,” said Sir Edward, commenting with some sadness on his complete failure, “I have never been able to arrive at any definite or satisfactory conclusion as to the best mode of meeting the requirements of a Protestant community.” †

It would have been said, in truth, but a short time ago, that no cause *could* be more hopeless than that which I am now advocating. The obstacle seemed to consist, not in the want of charity, but in the want of moral courage, and the most obtuse ignorance. Opinions are believed in simply because they are echoed round us. The conscience is trained to obey the pressure of an exterior force, rather

* Previous to the Revolution, the chief military hospitals and the naval hospitals at Brest, Saint-Malo, and Cherbourg, had been placed under the management of the Sisters of Charity. During the reign of Terror, those Sisters who refused to quit their habit and religious bond were expelled; but as soon as order was restored they were recalled by the naval and military authorities, and returned to their respective hospitals, where their reappearance was hailed with rejoicing and even with tears. At present the naval hospitals at Toulon and Marseilles, in addition to those I have mentioned, are again served by these women, acting *with*, as well as *under*, authority.

† “*Hospitals and Sisterhoods*,” p. 41.

them *romantic*, a convenient epithet, by which the worldly-minded set the seal of reprobation on anything which steps beyond the bounds of conventionalism—as if all that is really great and good in humanity were to be kept for fiction and poetry, and only its futilities and frivolities acted out into realities! And “sentiment,” with that squeamishness in regard to manners and latitude in regard to morals which characterise certain classes of society, stigmatised the whole arrangement as “unfeminine,”—another word of most convenient misapplication. The most hopeful and liberal-minded were troubled by a vision of a hundred enthusiastic sentimental women rushing off to Scutari, and on their arrival there falling into hysterics;—of “hard-headed Scotch surgeons,” wrathfully aghast at the invasion of their domains by impertinent femalities. Then there was the mockery of the light-minded; the atrocious innuendo of the dissolute; the sneer of the ignorant; the scepticism of the cold. I have seen men, who deem it quite a natural and necessary thing that a woman—*some* women at least—should lead the life of a courtesan, put on a look of offended propriety at the idea of a woman nursing a sick soldier. I have seen men, aye, and women too, who deem it a matter of course that our streets should be haunted by contagious vice, disgusted by the idea of women turning apothecaries and hospitalières. And worse than all, I have heard men, and women too, who acknowledge the teaching of Christ, who call themselves by his name, who believe in his mission of mercy, disputing about the exact shade of orthodoxy in a woman who had offered up every faculty of her being at the feet of her Redeemer!

On the other hand, people were heard congratulating each other on “the lucky chance” that a Miss Nightingale should have been forthcoming just at the moment she was wanted. Suppose there had been no Miss Nightingale at once able and willing to do the work—no woman in a position which gave her social influence to overcome the obstacles of custom and prejudice—suppose that the example of noble courage and devotion which led the way for others had been wanting—is every crisis of danger, distress, and difficulty involving human life, human suffering, human interests of the deepest consequence, to find us at the mercy of “a lucky chance?”—at the mercy of

communion between brave men and brave women. The work must be shared between them, or it will perish and fail utterly. Yet up to this moment you will find men and women working separately. You will observe that all legislation takes for granted that men and women are to be an everlasting cause of mutual mischief wherever combined; and always *supposes* an antagonistic position if they are separated. The most humane and recent laws aspire no farther than to defend the women from being beaten to death, and this because all legislation is derived from the old Pagan law, or the old monkish prejudices. These barbarous, and stupid, and irreligious notions have caused the evil they supposed, and incalculable has been the amount of sin and misery springing from them.

Not for ever, certainly—but for how long a period, who can tell?—such miserable obstacles might have continued to limit, to perplex, to paralyse the aspirations of the wise and benevolent, if a crisis had not come, and if that crisis had not found among us a man with sufficient faith and courage to break down the barriers of routine; and a woman generous and gentle, and gifted with sufficient energy to act out “the plan which pleased her childish thought,”* and prepared, by education and habit, as well as by a rare combination of the sympathetic and administrative faculties, to do so. Nothing could more strongly exhibit the perplexed state of feeling and opinion in this country on some momentous points than the manner in which Mr. Sidney Herbert’s proposal to send off a staff of voluntary female nurses to our hospitals in the East, and Miss Nightingale’s consent to place herself at the head of them, were received by the people, and commented on by the newspapers. There was, indeed, a genuine spontaneous burst of admiration from the public heart, mixed up, however, with fear, with incredulity, with amazement; as if it were a thing unheard of, unknown, and now for the first time attempted, that women of refined habits, and holding a certain position in society, should, from motives of piety and humanity, become nurses in an hospital. “Common-sense” styled

* “It is the generous spirit, who when brought
Among the tasks of real life hath wrought
Upon the plan which pleased his childish thought.”
Wordsworth.

people who have never thought seriously on any great question, or taken the trouble to make up their minds one way or another? I trust that England has many daughters not unworthy of being named with Florence Nightingale; as quick in sympathy, as calm in judgment, as firm in duty, as awake to charity; but the ability, the acquirements, the experience, the tact, the skill in judging and managing character, and overcoming adverse circumstances, at which ministers and officials were filled with wonder,—were these matters of chance? They were the result of years of study, of patient observation, of severe training. In what school? In none that England affords to her daughters; *this* is the wonder!

Even in the applause—the sort of glorification—which followed on the success of this experiment, there was something to sadden and humiliate a thinking and feeling mind. There was a perpetual reiteration of *astonishment* at the magnanimity of those who had quitted a comfortable, and in some cases a luxurious home, and all the pleasures of a refined and intellectual existence, “to assuage the sufferings of our gallant countrymen, and to perform a sacred and sublime duty;” as if to assuage suffering and to prefer a sacred and sublime duty to the temptations of leisure or pleasure, were not the woman’s province and privilege as well as the man’s; as if the same thing had never been done before in past times and other creeds; as if in these present times we had not known women who, in the midst of all the splendour of a luxurious home, have perished by a slow wasting disease of body and mind, because they had nothing to do—no sphere of activity commensurate with the large mental powers or passionate energy of character with which God had endowed them. Send such a woman to her piano, her books, her cross-stitch; she answers you with *despair*!—But send her on some mission of mercy, send her where she may perhaps die by inches in achieving good for others, and the whole spirit rises up strong and rejoicing.*

* One of the ladies at Scutari, rich, well-born, and accomplished, on being informed that she had been selected as one of those who were to be sent to a post where additional difficulty, suffering, and even danger awaited her, clasped her hands and uttered a fervent “Thank God!”

I remember a Sister of Charity who had been sent off at half an hour’s

I am anxious on this point not to be misunderstood. If you speak to some people of the necessity of finding better and higher employment for women, they inquire merrily how you would like a female house of parliament? or they congratulate themselves that ladies are not likely to act as constables or to be drawn for the militia. Thus they would put down one of the most terribly momentous questions that has ever occupied the thoughts of thoughtful men—a question which is at the very core of social morals: but none who now listen to me would, I think, condescend to such cruel and absurd wit.

Then again an intelligent and amiable man will say:—"It is all very well; but I should not like my daughter to do so-and-so." But the question is not what this or that individual would choose his daughter to do. It remains with him to settle this within the precincts of his family; only it is most unjust to make his particular feelings and opinions the rule of life for others, without once approaching the question as one of social morals, as one of justice and humanity; without once reflecting that all the unemployed and superfluous women in England cannot be sempstresses, governesses, and artists. Why is it that we see so many women carefully educated going over to the Roman Catholic Church? For no other reason but for the power it gives them to throw their energies into a sphere of definite utility under the control of a high religious responsibility. What has been done by our sisters of the Roman Catholic Church, can it not be accomplished in a religion which does not aim to subjugate, but to direct the will? What has been done under the hardest despotisms, and recognised in the midst of the wildest excesses of democracy, can it not be done under a political system which disdains to use the best and highest faculties of our nature in a spirit of calculation, or in furtherance of the purposes of a hierarchy or an oligarchy, — which boasts its equal laws and equal rights, and is at this moment ruled by a gentle-hearted, noble-minded woman?

The experiment of sending out women to nurse in the military hospitals (if that can be called an experiment

notice to a district where the cholera was raging amongst the most squalid and miserable poor, and I never shall forget the look of radiant happiness and thankfulness on that face.

which the experience of a thousand years had established as a principle), succeeded beyond all hope, and its success has demonstrated the deep-lying wisdom of what was at first a mere expedient adopted for a passing difficulty. "I believe," said Mr. Sidney Herbert, speaking from his place in Parliament, "that not only the patients themselves, but every person connected with the hospital, will be benefited by the admixture of this new element in the management of a military hospital." It will extend yet farther, as I hope and believe; to results incalculable and certainly not contemplated, when that band of sisters, accompanied by tears, prayers, and blessings, departed from our shores to the far East.

Another speaker expressed his belief that the mere presence and superintendence of gentle well-educated women would be morally beneficial. I recollect that it was said at first, that not only the medical attendants but the sick and suffering would be quite uncomfortably "embarrassed" by this innovation; but if a cessation of coarse language, if better feelings, if more self-control, arise from patients and orderlies being "embarrassed" by the presence and ministration of superior women, I conceive that it will not be an evil but a benefit, and one that will not, in all cases, cease with the hour of suffering. We may at least hope that a man who has been thus tended by gentle and superior beings of the other sex, will hardly be so ready as heretofore to make women the victims of his levity or brutality; what he did not spare for the sake of mother or sister, he may perhaps, in some hour of temptation and selfish impulse, spare for the sake of those who bent over him when "pain and anguish wrung the brow," and whispered low the solemn words of peace, of patience, of divine hope and comfort, while laying the pillow under a poor fellow's rough head, or holding the cup to his parched lips. As woman, even because she *is* woman, feels all the healing and strengthening power which lies in the man's mind, and in cases of severe physical or moral suffering, throws herself with almost helpless confidence on her priest or her physician—so it is with man:—he softens under the influence of a softer nature, he confesses a healing power in the organism which was created thus to refresh, restore, and purify his own, and yields to woman where he would

not yield to one of his own sex. This I believe to be a simple universal physiological law, not yet recognised in all its bearings. To borrow a happy illustration from Lord Macaulay — he asks, somewhere, "In how many months would the first human beings who settled on the shores of the ocean have been justified in believing that the moon had an influence on the tides?" and I may ask, for how many more centuries shall we stand on the shores of the great ocean of life without knowing under what near or remote mysterious influences its floods rise or fall, are moved to disturbance or hushed to tranquillity?

I am acquainted with an army surgeon whose regiment, a few years since, was ordered to India. Almost immediately on landing, numbers of the men were attacked by cholera. They were prostrated one after another—sank—died, almost as much from terror and despair as from the disease itself. As the senior surgeon, my friend felt deeply his responsibility—as a humane man he felt for the suffering of his men. He had exhausted all the resources of his art, but the disease was spreading fearfully. One morning, on coming home to his wife, after visiting the hospital, he said, "I don't know what to do with my poor fellows—they wring my very heart—they are dying of faint-heartedness as much as anything else!" "Suppose," said she, "I were to go and see them—would it do any good?" "Well," he replied, with tears in his eyes, "I should not have asked it of you, but, as you offer it, I think it *would* do good." She threw on her dressing-gown, and repaired at once to the hospital. Leaning on her husband's arm, she walked through the wards where the sick and dying lay crowded together;—she spoke kind and cheerful words to those who could hear her, and they seemed to revive under the influence of her presence. She continued her visits daily. The most despairing took comfort; men whose condition seemed hopeless recovered. They thought, they even said, "It is not so bad with us if *she* can come among us!" They watched for her coming, and received her, when she came, with blessings: and the ravages of the disease were from that time allayed. Now there is nothing extraordinary in all this; hundreds of such instances might be recorded; some example of the kind will probably start into the recollection of many who listen

to me; but such facts have never been brought together, and considered in the abstract as illustrating a principle, or as substantiating a truth—a most important principle, and a most vital truth; they remain, consequently, isolated facts, strongly exciting our sympathy and interest; and nothing more.

I have met with Protestant Sisters of Charity—very many—who did not assume that name for themselves. I will mention one instance. She was a lady, a foreigner not merely of good birth, but of high and titled rank. She had begun life in a court; she had been *dame d'honneur* to a brilliant princess. Certain events, on which I have no right to dwell, clouded her youth and gave her the wish to devote herself wholly to the service of the wretched. She consulted a well-known physician, who looked upon her resolve as a mere fit of excitement, and reasoned strongly against it. Finding this in vain, he thought to shock her delicate nerves by assigning to her at first some of the most trying, most revolting duties of an hospital. The effect was the reverse of what he expected. The near spectacle of suffering which she had power to aid and alleviate, the perception of certain evils she might have the power to reform or at least ameliorate, only made her more resolved, and she quietly took her vocation upon her and pursued it steadily. The first time I saw this lady she was seated in the garden of a mutual friend. It was a beautiful summer evening; she had finished her day's work, and her later duties had not commenced. She was sitting on a bench knitting, with a cup of coffee beside her, dressed with great simplicity, but without peculiarity; her face was grave, but when she looked up to speak it brightened into a ready smile. She had at that time pursued her vocation, unfaltering in courage and perseverance, for sixteen years; she had introduced, as I was told, many salutary reforms into the hospitals she had attended, and exercised wherever she went a beneficent influence.

Mr. Sidney Herbert, in requesting the assistance of Miss Nightingale, after using some arguments drawn even from that task "full of horror" to which he invited her,—arguments which no woman at once capable and tender-hearted could have resisted,—alluded to more remote but probable results following on her conduct. He said truly:—

"If this succeed, an enormous amount of good will be done now, and to persons deserving everything at our hands; and a prejudice will be broken through and a precedent established which will multiply the good to all time."

No doubt; but it will be through the patience, faith, and wisdom of men and women working together. In an undertaking so wholly new to our English customs, so much at variance with the usual education given to women in this country, we have met and shall meet with perplexities, difficulties, even failures. No doubt there are hundreds of women who would now gladly seize the privileges held out to them by the example of Florence Nightingale, and crowd to offer their services where needed; but would they pay the price for such dear and high privileges? Would they fit themselves duly for the performance of such services, and earn, by distasteful and even painful studies, the necessary certificates for skill and capacity? Would they go through a seven years' probation, to try at once the steadiness of their motives and the steadiness of their nerves? Such a trial is absolutely necessary, for hundreds of women will fall into the common error of mistaking an impulse for a vocation. But I do believe that there are also hundreds who are fitted, or would gladly, at any self-sacrifice, fit themselves, for the work, if the means of doing so were allowed to them. At present an English lady has no facilities whatever for obtaining the information or experience required; no such institutions are open to her, and yet she is ridiculed for presenting herself without the competent knowledge! This seems hardly just.

The horrors of war which called forth so noble a display of the best capabilities of women, are accidents in the world's history*; but the capabilities so called forth are not accidental, nor will they cease with the occasion. They are intrinsic and essential and ever at hand, though hidden under a mass of cruel conventionalities, like that ship-load of precious drugs and medicaments, which, as we are told, were stowed away under heaps of shell, shot, and gum-

* In the calamities which attended the mutinies in India, women, it was said, "endured like heroines and ministered like angels." As Carlyle would say, "Angels not without their flaws, but reasonable angels notwithstanding!" (1859.)

powder.* Having once discovered their treasures, men have now to use them. War will cease, but here at home, the need of women's active intelligence and tenderness to alleviate a mass of social evils, will not cease. The time is surely coming when we shall know how to apply such material better than we have yet done. The time is surely coming when private charity will not be so often desultory, capricious, misdirected, meddlesome, and unwelcome; when public charity will not be worked like a steam power, through mere official mechanism, but by human sympathies, cheerful, wise, and tender. The contributions poured into the magistrates' poor-box on every public appeal, the distribution of blankets and flannels, and soup, and all creature comforts, are in themselves things excellent and seasonable, and worthy of all imitation; but should this be the only intercourse between those who give and those who want?—those who pity and those who suffer? The love that works for our good should elicit love in return, or it is nothing but a machine. Such is not God's love to us, whose highest benefit it is that it awakens our responsive love for him, and makes us better through that love. Should we not also endeavour to make our fellow-creatures better through our charity, to touch the nature and make it respond to our own, till there shall be more of mutual faith and comprehension, as well as a more diffused sympathy through the different orders of society?

An institution such as I have in my mind, should be a place where women could obtain a sort of professional education under professors of the other sex,—for men are the best instructors of women;—where they might be trained as hospital and village nurses, visitors of the poor, and teachers in the elementary and reformatory schools; so that a certain number of women should always be found ready and competent to undertake such work in our public charitable and educational institutions as should be fitted for them;—I say *fitted* for them, and for which by individual capacity and inclination they should be *fitted*, and that corresponding fitness tested by a rather lengthened probation and a strict examination. It seems rather unjust to sneer at a woman's unfitness for certain high duties, domestic and social, unless the possibility of obtaining

* In the Crimean war.

better instruction be afforded. All the unmarried and widowed women of the working classes cannot be sempstresses and governesses; nor can all the unmarried women of the higher classes find in society and visiting, literature and art, the purpose, end, and aim of their existence. We have works of love and mercy for the best of our women to do, in our prisons and hospitals, our reformatory schools, and I will add our workhouses; but then we must have them such as we want them,—not impelled by transient feelings, but by deep abiding motives,—not amateur *ladies* of charity, but brave women, whose vocation is fixed and whose faculties of every kind have been trained and disciplined to their work under competent instruction from men, and tested by a long probation.

It will be said, perhaps, that when you thus train a woman's instinctive feelings of pity and tenderness for a particular purpose, to act under control and in concert with others, you take away their spontaneity, their grace, even in some sort their sincerity; consequently their power to work good. This is like the reasoning of my Uncle Toby, who, in describing the *Béguines*, says, "They visit and take care of the sick by profession; but I had rather, for my own part, that they did it out of good nature." Would Uncle Toby have admitted the necessary inference—namely, that when you train and discipline a man to be a soldier, to serve in the ranks, and obey orders under pain of being shot, you take away his valour, his manly strength, his power to use his weapon? We know it is not so. Never yet did the sense of duty diminish the force of one generous impulse in man or woman!—that sublimest of bonds, when in harmony with our true instincts, intensifies while it directs them.

There are many other objections and obstacles, lying in our onward path, of which I cannot dissemble the magnitude. There is in this country a sort of scrupulousness about interfering with the individual will, which renders it peculiarly difficult to make numbers work together unless disciplined as you would discipline a regiment. Yet in any community of reasonable beings, therefore in any community of women, as of men, there must be gradations of capacity,* and difference of work.

* "Many years ago, during a residence in Warrington,—at that

A wisely organised system of work — intellectual and moral as well as mechanical work — provides for this *natural* inequality, and does not place human beings in positions which they are *naturally* unable to fill with advantage to themselves or others; and that would be a strange law which should oblige a master manufacturer to employ *botchers* in the place of skilled workmen because they present themselves, and because they also have a right to live by their work.

To make or require vows of obedience is objectionable; yet we know that the voluntary nurses who went to the East were called upon to do what comes to the same thing—

period the seat of a number of branches of industry demanding artistic skill, as the manufacture of flint glass, of files, and of all kinds of tools, — when sitting one night by the fire of a tool-maker. I was struck by the beauty of the small files, vices, and other tools used in watchmaking. Knowing that he employed apprentices, I asked if he found that they all had the steady patience, the clearness of sight, and delicacy of hand required for such work; to which he replied, that not half attained the skill to qualify them, at the end of their term, for journeymen; that some gave up the attempt to learn the branch, and went to another; that others, who completed their apprenticeship, if they remained, got employment only when trade was brisk; when it was slack they were the first to be discharged; whilst others, again, became labourers, that is, served the skilful hands.

"I next inquired of a glass manufacturer, himself originally a workman, what proportion, apprenticed to the flint-glass making, were worth retaining as journeymen; when he replied — 'Out of ten apprenticed, not three prove good hands; the others mostly fall to the lower branches, as tending the furnaces and the like; a certain number, too, are retained in the place of boys, that is, as the glass-blowers' assistants; but when fresh apprentice lads are taken, or when trade is slack, these inferior hands are sure to be dismissed.' In respect to glass-cutting, he said, that probably not half the apprentices turn out expert; that they drop away out of the branch; but he was unable to say to what else they betook themselves. With the same object I continued, in subsequent years, to inquire of master shoemakers, tailors, letterpress printers, bookbinders, and of masters in other trades demanding dexterity and skill, and have found that a considerable proportion of those put to acquire such branches either fail to do so and drop lower, or they remain in them and are known by the name of *botchers*. In this way the descent of numbers in every trade goes on continually, and shows an inequality in mankind, as to talents, that will ever baffle the hopes of those enthusiastic reformers who, in their schemes, or rather dreams, of social improvement, overlook this natural diversity, and who would regard all the individuals composing the labouring class as entitled to share in the fruits of labour." — "I refer to *natural* inequality, for which there is no help — as distinguished from *culpable* inequality, the effect of evil passions and tempers which generate habits injurious or even completely obstructive to success in life." — *On Municipal Government*.

to sign an engagement to obey implicitly a controlling and administrative power—or the whole undertaking must have fallen to the ground. Then, again, questions about costume have been mooted which appear to me wonderfully absurd. It has been suggested that there should be something of uniformity and fitness in the dress worn when on duty, and this seems but reasonable. I recollect once seeing a lady in a gay light muslin dress, with three or four flounces, and roses under her bonnet, going forth to visit her sick poor. The incongruity struck the mind painfully—not merely as an incongruity, but as an impropriety, like a soldier going to the trenches in opera hat and laced ruffles. Such follies, arising from individual obtuseness, must be met by regulations dictated by good sense, and submitted to as a matter of necessity and obligation.

But it is not my intention to go into any of these minor points of discipline and questions of detail. One great object has been achieved—a principle has been admitted, a precedent has been established, of female labour, organised for noble purposes of public utility, approved by public opinion, guided and assisted by man's more comprehensive intellect, sustained and sanctioned by the authority of the ruling powers. All schemes for the public good, in which men and women do not work in communion, have in them the seeds of change, discord, and decay. Some time ago Miss Bremer (the Swedish authoress) planned a sort of universal feminine coalition—a sort of female corresponding society for sundry pious and charitable purposes. Her plan virtually excluded the co-operation of the masculine brain, thus dividing what Nature herself has decreed should never be disunited without mischief, the element of *power* and the element of *love*. The idea was simply absurd and necessarily impracticable. Such an association of one half of the human species in an attitude of independence as regards the other, would have excited a spirit of antagonism in the men; and among the women, would have speedily degenerated into a gossiping, scribbling, stitching community, unstable as water; and nothing more need be said of it here, except that it fully deserved the witty rebuke it met with, though not solely nor chiefly on the alleged grounds.

And now I may leave the question at the point to which

I have brought it. I will only add that the history of the past, of the possible, of the actually accomplished, which I have here rapidly sketched out, should give us courage in the present and hope for the future.

It is a subject of reproach that in this Christendom of ours, the theory of good which we preach should be so far in advance of our practice; but that which provokes the sneer of the sceptic and almost kills faith in the sufferer, lifts up the contemplative mind with hope. Man's *theory* of good is God's *reality*; man's experience, is the degree to which he has already worked out, in his human capacity, that divine reality. Therefore, whatever our practice may be, let us hold fast to our theories of possible good; let us, at least, however they outrun our present powers, keep them in sight, and then our formal lagging practice may in time overtake them. In social morals, as well as in physical truths, "The goal of yesterday" will be the starting point of to-morrow; and the things before which all England now stands in admiring wonder will become "the simple produce of the common day." Thus we hope and believe.

THE COMMUNION OF LABOUR.

I Second Lecture

ON THE

SOCIAL EMPLOYMENTS OF WOMEN.

(Delivered privately, June 23, 1850, and printed by desire.)

"Nevertheless neither is the man without the woman, nor the
woman without the man, in the Lord."

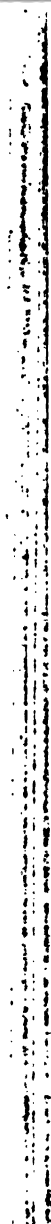
1 Cor. xi. 11.

THE COMMUNION OF LABOUR.

WHEN the following Lecture was delivered, more than one half was omitted, in consequence of its too great length. It is now printed as it was originally written, with additional notes and details. It must be considered, on the whole, as merely supplementary to the Lecture on "Sisters of Charity," as an illustration and expansion, through facts and examples, of the principles there briefly set forth,—namely, that a more equal distribution of the work which has to be done, and a more perfect communion of interests in the work which is done, are, in the present state of society, imperatively demanded.

This Lecture having been delivered orally to a circle of friends, has unconsciously assumed a somewhat egotistical tone and form, which the reader is entreated kindly to excuse, and to remember that its intention is not to dictate, but merely to suggest.

AUGUST 17, 1856.



THE COMMUNION OF LABOUR.

THE INFLUENCE OF LEGISLATION ON THE MORALS AND HAPPINESS OF MEN AND WOMEN.

It is now nearly a year and half since my friends gathered round me and listened very kindly and patiently to certain suggestions relative to the social employments of women, more especially as "SISTERS OF CHARITY, at home and abroad." The views I then advocated had been long in my mind: but great events, at that time recent, and coming home to all hearts, had rendered the exposition of those views more seasonable, more interesting, perhaps also more intelligible, than they would otherwise have been.

The publication of that Lecture having attracted more attention than I had reason to expect, and having given rise to some discussion, public and private, I have been advised, and have taken courage, once more, and probably for the last time, to recur to the same subject. It is a subject which, if it be worth any attention whatever, is worth the most serious and solemn consideration; for it concerns no transient, no partial interest, lying on the surface of life, but rather the very stuff of which life is made. Some new observations, some additional facts, I have to communicate, which, while they illustrate the principles laid down in my former Lecture, will, I hope, add force to my arguments. These observations, these facts, will not at once overcome all objections, will not in the first instance meet with anything like general acceptance; but they will perhaps open up new sources of thought; and if thought lead to inquiry, and inquiry lead to conviction—for or against—I should be content to abide that issue.

The questions as yet unsettled seem to be these :—

Whether a more enlarged sphere of social work may not be allowed to woman in perfect accordance with the truest feminine instincts? Whether there be not a possibility of her sharing practically in the responsibilities of social as well as domestic life? Whether she might not be better prepared to meet and exercise such higher responsibilities? Whether such a communion of labour might not lead to the more humane ordering of many of our public institutions; to a purer standard of morals; and to a better mutual comprehension and a finer harmony between men and women, when thus called upon to work together, and (in combining what is best in the two natures) becoming what God intended them to be, the supplement to each other?

Let it not be supposed that I am about to enter an arena of public strife. For any truth in which I believe, I could suffer—no matter what—or die if need were, yet feel that I could scarcely strike a blow, far less inflict a wound. Conflict, which rouses up the best and highest powers in some characters, in others not only jars the whole being, but paralyzes the faculties. This, of course, is a mere matter of individual temperament; yet, on the whole, in looking back to the history of human progress, I doubt whether any great truth was ever much advanced by conflict, still less by compromise. The hardest battle ever fought for truth left some doubt as to which side had the advantage; and those who have conceded or sacrificed some portion of the truth by way of securing some other portion (a favourite expedient with politicians who call themselves practical), have not, I think, been successful in their piecemeal morality, or their piecemeal legislation. Let us accept gratefully some portion of what we believe to be just, if we cannot yet obtain the whole; but that is quite different from conceding any portion of a principle. We shall meantime do well to take our stand on the highest point we can attain to, beyond the reach of the tempest and the conflict which agitate the waves of fashion and opinion. At last, the rising flood will bring to our side those who have been swimming with the current, or struggling in the turmoil; catching at every stray fragment of popular doctrine which floated past them at the level of their eye, and holding it up as if they had rescued from the deep some priceless truth.

These deceptions they have dropped one by one, and now we have them beside us: they have planted their foot where we have planted ours. We are no longer lonely, and we have been ever at peace with ourselves and others; seemingly passive to falsehood, but in reality steadfast in faith;—and this is better than strife.

But ere I proceed farther, there is one point on which I am anxious not to be misunderstood, one consideration which I am desirous to place on its true grounds in reference to my present subject—the social position and occupations of women.

“Gagnez les femmes,” said one of the acutest of modern politicians when giving his last instructions to an ambassador. “We write in vain if we have not the women on our side,” said one of the poets of our own time; and we women know full well that we must think, and write, and speak in vain without the sanction of the manly intellect,—without the sympathy of the manly heart. At this moment I feel assured of both as I have never felt before.

It ought to give us courage and comfort to know that the laws relating to property and marriage which have hitherto pressed so heavily on the well-being and happiness of one-half of the community are under the consideration of wise and able men, and may be safely left in their hands. We may have to wait long for those practical measures of justice which are contemplated, but we can afford to wait, now that the injustice has been openly acknowledged by philosophical statesmen and experienced lawyers. There still exist, however, some singular misconceptions, both as to the existing evil and the remedy required; and the expression of opinion and feeling in public and in private, which has arisen out of the late discussion of these laws in both Houses of Parliament, has been very curious and conflicting.

We must acknowledge, that a law which should forbid a woman to give all she has to give to the man she loves and trusts, though to her own perdition, would be certainly a very foolish and a very useless law. Whether the concession be from impulse, or devotedness, or pity, or ignorance, she must abide by her own act, it must rest on her own conscience. But the law which punishes, with extreme severity, the man who takes from her by force

what she desires to withhold, is a just and righteous law. So, in regard to property, a law which should interdict the woman from giving all her possessions and earnings, if she chooses, to her husband, would be a foolish and a useless law: in this case, as in the other, she must abide by her own act, and its consequences. But the law which empowers her husband to take away all she may possess, or may have earned by her labour, against her will and to her destruction, is surely cruel. Again, a law which should give to the wife the independent administration of her property, and at the same time leave her husband responsible for her debts, would be equally foolish and cruel. These seem to be clear and simple principles of justice which will be carried out sooner or later, though the legal details at this present time may be complicated by difficulties arising out of existing laws.*

But I must here distinctly explain that, when asked to place my name to a petition against the present marital laws of property, I did so, with no especial reference to their practical effect in particular instances, but merely as I would protest against any other manifest injustice either in regard to men, or women, or both. The truth is, that far beyond the palpable, visible working of these laws, cruel as they are in individual cases, lies an infinitely more fatal mischief in their injurious effect on the masses of the people. What matter how such laws act here or there,—how far they are to be excused as expedient, or to be sustained by custom,—how easily they may be evaded by one class though they fall heavily on another?—what signifies all this if they permeate, and in some sort vitiate, the relations of the two sexes throughout the whole community? The direct action of such laws may be confined to the conjugal relation; but the indirect action, as reflected in feeling and opinion, operates on all, married and unmarried. These observations refer merely to their practical effects;

* A woman seldom generalises. Put the question before her, whether a wife should have some control over her own earnings, she exclaims, "Not for the world! I leave all these things to Fred; Fred understands money-matters, and accounts, and all that; and it is such a pleasure to owe everything to him!" Of course we sympathise with the wife, her Fred standing for all mankind, and her own position for that of all women: meantime, how does it fare with her poor working sister in the neighbouring alley? for that also is to be considered.

but not even those who plead for their expediency in a complex commercial community, where the question of property enters into all relations and contracts, and can hardly be touched without danger or at least disturbance, deny the abstract injustice of such laws. Now every injustice is a form of falsehood; every falsehood accepted and legalised, works in the social system like poison in the physical frame, and may taint the whole body politic through and through, ere we have learned in what quivering nerve or delicate tissue to trace and detect its fatal presence. Human laws which contravene the laws of God are not laws but lies; and like all lies, must perish in the long run. But there was a saying of a clever politician, that a lie believed in but for half an hour might cause a century of mischief. What then, I would ask, is likely to be the effect of these laws which have existed as part of our common law for centuries past, — laws which may well be called lies, inasmuch as they suppose a state of things which has no real existence in the divine regulation of the world? — laws which, during all that period, have tended to degrade the woman in the eyes of the man, interfered with the sacredness of the domestic relations, and infected the whole social system?

I regard the existence of these laws as the source of especial and fatal mischief. I look upon them as one cause why it is difficult for men and women to work together harmoniously; — how can it be otherwise where the conditions under which they must be associated are, in the first instance, so unequal as to be almost antagonistic? I look upon these laws as one cause of prostitution, because, in so far as they have lowered the social position of the woman, they have lowered the value of her labour, and have thus exposed her to want and temptation, which would not otherwise have existed.*

Farther, I consider these laws, in so far as they have

* This at least is the opinion of a man of large experience, Mr. F. Hill, for many years inspector of prisons. He observes that the sin and misery alluded to would probably be greatly diminished "if public opinion no longer upheld the exclusive spirit by which most of the lucrative employments are restricted to the male sex, whereby the difficulties with which females have to contend in earning an honest livelihood are greatly increased." — "*Crime, its Amount, Causes, and Remedies*," by F. Hill, Inspector of Prisons.

influenced the mutual relations of the two sexes, as one cause of those outrages on women which are every day brought before the magistrates, to the disgrace of our civilised England.

And is it not rather absurd at this time of day to devise, as an antidote of the working of these laws, another law, really as unjust in its way, which punishes a man for ill treating the creature he has been authorised to regard as his inferior? Every act of our legislature which takes for granted a state of antagonism, not harmony, between the masculine and the feminine nature, has tended to create that antagonism. Every act of our legislature, which, on the one hand, first legalises wrong, and then, on the other hand, interposes with legal protection against that wrong, must appear to simple, honest minds a very cruel and clumsy anomaly. By this perpetual, absurd alternation of legalised wrong and legalised vengeance for the wrong, you demoralise relatively both men and women; — the woman is degraded in the sight of the man as the licensed victim, the man in the sight of the woman as the chastised tyrant.

I cannot but think that those good men — prelates, fathers, and lawyers — who watch over and guard the public morality, and are so fearful lest the harmony and purity of domestic life should suffer by any change in those laws, — I cannot but think them, with submission, mistaken, and that they take but a one-sided and short-sighted view of a most awful subject. I cannot but think that by the abrogation of those laws which have disturbed the divine equilibrium in the relation between the sexes, they would do more for the morality of men and the protection of women, than by punishing hundreds of brutal husbands.*

* In the "North British Review" for June 1856, there is an excellent article on wife-beating, its causes and its remedies. Among the causes adduced, the influence of existing laws on the morals and the feelings of the lower classes is not expressly mentioned, but it is implied, I think, in the following passage:—

"Tender, considerate, self-sacrificing, caressing on the one hand, violent, selfish, brutal on the other, man treats his helpmate as a child or an invalid, incapable of self-assertion and self-defence, indeed of all independent action, and therefore an object of deference and attention, to be humoured and indulged, to be aided and supported; or else as an inferior animal, strong in endurance, to be buffeted, and persecuted, and

Wise men have doubted whether there ought to be separate laws concerning women as such; and scout with reason such phrases as the *rights of women* and the *wrongs of women*. I have always had such an intimate conviction of the absurdity of such phrases, that I believe I never used them seriously in my life. In a free country, and a Christian community, a woman has the rights which belong to her as a human being and as a member of the community, and she has no others. I think it a dangerous and a fatal mistake to legislate on the assumption that there are feminine and masculine rights and wrongs, just as I deem it a fatal error in morals to assume that there are masculine and feminine virtues and vices: there are masculine and feminine *qualities*, wisely and beautifully discriminated, but there are not masculine and feminine virtues and vices. Let us not cheat ourselves by what

outraged, and humiliated, and made to suffer every kind of wrong. Now, all this doubtless arises from the one common feeling that woman is the 'weaker vessel.' As is man's conception of the purposes and uses of strength, so is his treatment of woman either of a defensive or an offensive character. In either case, there is an overweening sense of his own superiority, the practical expression of which, whatever its intent, is degrading to the other sex. We are very far from any disposition to assert that the two extremes of defensiveness and offensiveness are equal evils; it may seem, indeed, to be something of a paradox to place them in the same category; but they are evils which, though differing in degree, arise from the same cause and tend to the same result; both indicate and perpetuate the weakness of woman. To start from one's seat or rush across a room to pick up a woman's pocket-handkerchief, or to open a door for her, is a very different thing from knocking her down and stamping upon her; but both acts originate in the same sense of man's superiority, and tend to perpetuate woman's weakness: the one is a blunder, the other a crime."

I quite agree with the writer that the substitution of flogging for imprisonment, as the more immediate and degrading punishment of the two, however well deserved, would fail in its effect, and that a woman who, under the present law, makes her complaint with extreme reluctance, under a law of retaliation will not make it at all: and she is right. The general impression which exists, that even the women of the lowest grade will not avail themselves of the protection of the law under such conditions, shows us the nature of the creature, though the coarse, the cruel, and the vengeful be found among them. In fact, the remedy lies deeper than law can reach. The writer observes, in conclusion, "What is wanted indeed most of all, is something that will make it less a necessity with women to unite themselves legally or illegally with the other sex. In a large number of cases, what a woman most looks for in matrimony or concubinage is a bread-finder. The example is set by the higher classes, where marriage is looked upon as the end and aim of woman's life. What else, it is said, can she do?"

Mrs. Malaprop would call "a nice derangement of epithets," lest "a nice derangement" of morals ensue thereupon; lest our ideas get hopelessly entangled in words, and our principles of right and wrong become mystified by sentimental phrases.

Nothing in all my experience of life has so shocked me, as the low moral standard of one sex for the other, arising, as I believe, out of this irreligious mistake. I see, among the women of our higher classes, those who have lived much in "the world" as it is called, a sort of mysterious horror of the immorality of men, not as a thing to be resisted or resented or remedied, but to be submitted to as a sort of fatality and necessity (for so it has been instilled into them) or guarded against by a mere inefficient barricade of conventional proprieties; while I see in men of the world a contemptuous mistrust of women, an impression of their faithlessness, heartlessness, feebleness, equally fatal and mistaken. Men are not all sensual and selfish; women are not *all* false and feeble. Women, I am sorry to say it, *can* be sensual and selfish; men *can* be false and weak; but then I have known men, manly men, with all the tenderness and refinement we attribute to women, and I have known women who have united with all their own soft sympathies and acute perceptions, quite a manly strength and sincerity. The union is rare; it brings the individual so endowed near to our ideal of human perfection; it is what we ought to aim at in all our schemes of education. Meantime, let us have what is the next best thing, the combination of the two natures, the two influences in all that we are trying to effect for the good of the "human family."

I return to the so-called "rights and wrongs of women" only to dismiss them at once from our thoughts and our subject. Morally a woman has a right to the free and entire development of every faculty which God has given her to be improved and used to His honour. Socially she has a right to the protection of equal laws; the right to labour with her hands the thing that is good; to select the kind of labour which is in harmony with her condition and her powers; to exist, if need be, by her labour, or to profit others by it if she choose. These are her rights, not more nor less than the rights of the man. Let us therefore

put aside all futile and unreal distinctions. I go back to the principle laid down in my former Lecture, and I appeal against human laws and customs to the eternal and immutable law of God. When He created all living creatures male and female, was it not His will that out of this very disparity in unity, this likeness in unlikeness, there should spring an indissoluble bond of mutual attraction and mutual dependence, increasing in degree and durability with every advance of sentient life? And when He raised *us*, His human creatures, above mere animal existence, did He not make the union, by choice and will, of the man and the woman the basis of all domestic life? all *domestic* life the basis of all social life? all *social* life the basis of all national life? How, then, shall our social and national life be pure and holy, and well ordered before God and man, if the domestic affections and duties be not carried out, and expanded, and perfected in the larger social sphere, and in the same spirit of mutual reverence, trust, and kindness which we demand in the primitive relation? It appears to me that when the Creator endowed the two halves of the human race with ever-aspiring hopes, with ever-widening sympathies, with ever-progressive capacities,—when He made them equal in the responsibilities which bind the conscience and in the temptations which mislead the will,—He linked them inseparably in an ever-extending sphere of duties, and an ever-expanding communion of affections; thus, in one simple, holy, and beautiful ordinance, binding up at once the continuation of the species and its moral, social, and physical progress, through all time.

Let these premises be granted, and hence it follows as a *first* natural and necessary result, and one which the wisest philosophers have admitted, that the relative position of the man and the woman in any community is invariably to be taken as a test of the degree of civilisation and well-being in that community. Hence, as a *second* result equally natural and necessary, we find that all that extends and multiplies the innocent relations, the kindly sympathies, the mutual services of men and women, must lead to the happiness and improvement of both. Hence, *thirdly*, if either men or women arrogate to themselves exclusively any of the social work or social privileges which can be performed or exercised perfectly only in communion, they

will inevitably fail in their objects, and end probably in corrupting each other. Hence, in conclusion, this last inevitable result; that wherever the nature of either man or woman is considered as self-dependent or self-sufficing, their rights and wrongs as distinct, their interests as opposed or even capable of separation, there we find cruel and unjust laws, discord and confusion entering into all the forms of domestic and social life, and the element of decay in all our institutions. In the midst of our apparent material prosperity, let some curious or courageous hand lift up but a corner of that embroidered pall which the superficial refinement of our privileged and prosperous classes has thrown over society, and how we recoil from the revelation of what lies seething and festering beneath! How we are startled by glimpses of hidden pain, and covert vice, and horrible wrongs done and suffered! Then come strange trials before our tribunals, polluting the public mind. Then are great blue books piled up before Parliament, filled with reports of inspectors and committees. Then eloquent newspaper articles are let off like rockets into an abyss, just to show the darkness — and expire. Then have we fitful, clamorous bursts of popular indignation and remorse; hasty partial remedies for antiquated mischiefs; clumsy tinkering of barbarous and inadequate laws; — then the vain attempt to solder together undeniable truths and admitted falsehoods into some brittle, plausible compromise; — then at last the slowly awakening sense of a great want aching deep down at the heart of society, throbbing upwards and outwards with a quicker and a quicker pulse; and then — what then? What if this great want, this *something* which we crave and seek, be in a manner a part of ourselves? — lying so near to us, so close at our feet, that we have overlooked and lost it in reaching after the distant, the difficult, the impracticable?

THE COMMUNION OF LABOUR IN SANITARY, EDUCATIONAL, REFORMATORY, AND PENAL INSTITUTIONS.

Work in some form or other is the appointed lot of all — divinely appointed; and, given as equal the religious responsibilities of the two sexes, might we not, in distributing

the work to be done in this world, combine and use in more equal proportion the working faculties of men and women, and so find a remedy for many of those mistakes which have vitiated some of our noblest educational and charitable institutions? Is it not possible that in the apportioning of the work we may have too far sundered what in God's creation never can be sundered without pain and mischief, the masculine and the feminine influences? — lost the true balance between the element of power and the element of love? and trusted too much to mere mechanical means for carrying out high religious and moral purposes?

It seems indisputable that the mutual influence of the two sexes — brain upon brain — life upon life — becomes more subtle, and spiritual, and complex, more active and more intense, in proportion as the whole human race is improved and developed. The physiologist knows this well: let the moralist give heed to it, lest in becoming more intense, and active, and extended, such influences become at the same time less beneficent, less healthful, and less manageable.

It appears to me that we do wrong to legislate, and educate, and build up institutions without taking cognisance of this law of our being. It appears to me that the domestic affections and the domestic duties — what I have called the “communion of love and the communion of labour” — must be taken as the basis of all the more complicate social relations, and that the family sympathies must be carried out and developed in all the forms and duties of social existence, before we can have a prosperous, healthy, happy, and truly Christian community. Yes! — I have the deepest conviction, founded not merely on my own experience and observation, but on the testimony of some of the wisest and best men among us, that to enlarge the working sphere of woman to the measure of her faculties, to give her a more practical and authorised share in all social arrangements which have for their object the amelioration of evil and suffering, is to elevate her in the social scale; and that whatever renders womanhood respected and respectable in the estimation of the people tends to humanise and refine the people.

It is surely an anomaly that, while women are divided

from men in learning and working by certain superstitions of a conventional morality, and in social position by the whole spirit and tendency of our past legislation, their material existence and interests are regarded as identical; — identical however only in this sense — that the material and social interests of the woman are always supposed to be merged in those of the man; while it is never taken for granted that the true interests of the man are inseparable from those of the woman: so at the outset we are met by inconsistency and confusion, such as must inevitably disturb the security and integrity of all the mutual relations.

Here then I take my stand, not on any hypothesis of expediency, but on what I conceive to be an essential law of life; and I conclude that all our endowments for social good, whatever their especial purpose or denomination — educational, sanitary, charitable, penal — will prosper and fulfil their objects in so far as we carry out this principle of combining in due proportion the masculine and the feminine element, and will fail or become perverted into some form of evil in so far as we neglect or ignore it.

HOSPITALS.

I WILL now proceed to illustrate my position by certain facts connected with the administration of various public institutions at home and abroad.

And, first, with regard to hospitals.

What is the purpose of a great hospital? Ask a physician or a surgeon, zealous in his profession: he will probably answer that a great hospital is a great medical school in which the art of healing is scientifically and experimentally taught; where the human sufferers who crowd those long vistas of beds are not men and women, but "cases" to be studied: and so under one aspect it ought to be, and must be. A great, well-ordered medical school is absolutely necessary; and to be able to regard the various aspects of disease with calm discrimination, the too sensitive human sympathies must be set aside. Therefore much need is there here of all the masculine firmness of nerve and strength of understanding. But surely a great hospital has another purpose, that for which it was originally founded

and endowed, namely, as a refuge and solace for disease and suffering. Here are congregated in terrible reality all the ills enumerated in Milton's visionary lazar-house,—

“ All maladies
Of ghastly spasm or racking torture, qualms
Of heart-sick agony, wide-wasting pestilence ” —

I spare you the rest of the horrible catalogue. He goes on —

“ Dire was the tossing, deep the groans ; despair
Tended the sick, busiest from couch to couch.”

But why must despair tend the sick ? We can imagine a far different influence “ busiest from couch to couch ! ”

There is a passage in Tennyson's poems, written long before the days of Florence Nightingale, which proves that poets have been rightly called prophets, and see “ the thing that shall be as the thing that is.” I will repeat the passage. He is describing the wounded warriors nursed and tended by the learned ladies.

“ A kindlier influence reigned, and everywhere
Low voices with the ministering hand
Hung round the sick. The maidens came, they talked,
They sung, they read, till she, not fair, began
To gather light, and she that was, became
Her former beauty treble ; to and fro,
Like creatures native unto gracious act,
And in their own clear element they moved.”

This you will say is the poetical aspect of the scene : was it not poetical too when the poor soldier said that the very shadow of Florence Nightingale passing over his bed seemed to do him good ?

But to proceed. The practical advantages, the absolute necessity of a better order of nurses to take the charge and supervision of the sick in our hospitals, is now so far admitted that it is superfluous to add anything to what I said in my former Lecture. It is not now maintained that a class of women, whom I have heard designated by those who employ them as drunken, vulgar, unfeeling, and inefficient, without any religious sense of responsibility, and hardened by the perpetual sight of suffering, are alone eligible to nurse and comfort the sick poor. One great

cause of the cruelty and neglect charged against hospital nurses is, that they become insensibly and gradually hardened by perpetual sights and sounds of suffering. "A good nurse ought to receive every new case of affliction as if it were the first;" so it has been said: but if we look for this ever fresh fount of sympathy and conscientiousness either from natural kindness of heart, sense of duty, or love of gain, we shall be disappointed. In a small hospital for wretched, helpless, bedridden paupers, one of the religious women acknowledged to me that their duties were of a nature so painful and revolting, and in their issue, which could end only in death, so depressing, that still, after being for years accustomed to the work, they were obliged every morning to dedicate themselves anew to their duty, "for the love of God." It is because they were *accustomed* to the work, that such a renewed and especial consecration to it in heart and soul was daily necessary: nothing hardens like custom.

"You ought to understand," said Mr. Maurice, "that the study of disease for the purpose of science has no tendency to harden the heart." True; but to minister to disease with no ulterior purpose but self-interest, though it be of an elevated and enlightened kind, does and *must* harden the heart in the long run.

It is one cause of that languor, and despondency, and impatience, which sometimes comes over zealous and kind-hearted women who devote themselves to the sick, and miserable, and perverted, and ignorant poor, that they begin with a conviction that they shall find their reward in a certain palpable result of their labour; that after a time they shall be able to count their successes on their fingers. Those who set about fulfilling the teaching of Christ on such terms are only a degree better than those who work for hire of another kind. In what is heart-warm charity better than ambition or love of glory if it be not in this—that those who do God's work must devote themselves to it daily in a stronger faith and in a loftier hope, in the faith that no atom of such work shall be lost or pass away?

One purpose of an hospital supposes the presence of the feminine nature to *minister* through love as well as the masculine intellect to *rule* through power,—the presence of those who can soothe and comfort as well as those who

can heal. Now I will speak of what I have seen where this combined *régime* prevails.

The Paris hospitals are so admirably organised by the religious women, who in almost every instance share in the administration so far as regards the care of the sick, that I have often been surprised that hitherto the numbers of our medical men who have studied at Paris have not made any attempts to introduce a better system of female nursing into the hospitals at home. But they appear to have regarded everything of the kind with despair or indifference.

In my former Lecture I mentioned several of the most famous of these hospitals: during my last visit to Paris I visited an hospital which I had not before seen—the hospital Lariboissière, which appeared to me a model of all that a civil hospital ought to be, clean, airy, light, and lofty, above all, cheerful. I should observe that generally in the hospitals served by Sisters of Charity, there is ever an air of cheerfulness caused by their own sweetness of temper and voluntary devotion to their work. At the time that I visited this hospital it contained 612 patients, 300 men and 312 women, in two ranges of building divided by a very pretty garden. The whole interior management is entrusted to twenty-five trained Sisters of the same Order as those who serve the Hôtel-Dieu. There are besides about forty servants, men and women,—men to do the rough work, and male nurses to assist in the men's wards under the superintendence of the Sisters. There are three physicians and two surgeons in constant attendance, a steward or comptroller of accounts, and other officers. To complete this picture, I must add that the hospital Lariboissière was founded by a lady, a rich heiress, a married woman too, whose husband, after her death, carried out her intentions to the utmost with zeal and fidelity. She had the assistance of the best architects in France to plan her building: medical and scientific men had aided her with their counsels. What the feminine instinct of compassion had conceived was by the manly intellect planned and ordered, and again by female aid administered. In all its arrangements this hospital appeared to me a perfect example of the combined working of men and women.*

* The superiority of small hospitals over large ones in regard to all the moral conditions of management and the health of the patients was

In contrast with this splendid foundation, I will mention another not less admirable in its way.

When I was at Vienna, I saw a small hospital belonging to the Sisters of Charity there. The beginning had been very modest, two of the Sisters having settled in a small old house. Several of the adjoining buildings were added one after the other, connected by wooden corridors: the only new part which had any appearance of being adapted to its purpose was the infirmary, in which were fifty-two patients, twenty-six men and twenty-six women, besides nine beds for cholera. There were fifty Sisters, of whom one-half were employed in the house, and the other half were going their rounds amongst the poor, or nursing the sick in private houses. There was a nursery for infants, whose mothers were at work; a day-school for one hundred and fifty girls, in which only knitting and sewing were taught; all clean, orderly, and, above all, cheerful. There was a dispensary, where two of the Sisters were employed in making up prescriptions, homœopathic and allopathic. There was a large airy kitchen where three of the Sisters with two assistants were cooking. There were two priests and two physicians. So that, in fact, under this roof we had the elements on a small scale of an English work-house; but very different was the spirit which animated it.

I saw at Vienna another excellent hospital for women alone, of which the whole administration and support rested with the ladies of the Order of St. Elizabeth. These are *cloistered*, that is, not allowed to go out of their home to nurse the sick and poor; nor have they any schools; but all sick women who apply for admission are taken in without any questions asked, so long as there is room for them—cases of child-birth excepted. At the time I visited this hospital it contained ninety-two patients: about twenty

pointed out to me by a distinguished Italian physician; but he thought they would involve more material difficulties, more trouble to the officials, more expense to the public, and be less convenient and available as schools for young surgeons and physicians. In this view Miss Nightingale seems to agree.

In the "Transactions of the National Association for the Promotion of Social Science for 1858," there is a paper by Florence Nightingale "On the Sanitary Condition of Hospitals," in which the admirable construction of the Lariboisière Hospital is pointed out and a plan given.

were cases of cholera. There were sixteen beds in each ward, over which two Sisters presided. The dispensary, which was excellently arranged, was entirely managed by two of the ladies. The Superior told me that they have always three or more Sisters preparing for their profession under the best apothecaries; and there was a large garden principally of medicinal and kitchen herbs. Nothing could exceed the purity of the air, and the cleanliness, order, and quiet everywhere apparent.

In the great civil hospital at Vienna, one of the largest I have ever seen, larger even than the *Hôtel Dieu* at Paris, I found that the Sisters of Charity were about to be introduced. One of my friends there, a distinguished naturalist and philosopher, as well as physician, told me that the disorderly habits and the want of intelligence in the paid female nurses, had induced him to join with his colleagues in inviting the cooperation of the religious Sisters, though it was at first rather against their will. In the hospital of St. John at Salzburg the same change had been found necessary.

I suppose that every traveller who has visited Milan remembers at least the outside of that most venerable and beautiful building, the '*Spedale Maggiore* (the Great Hospital). The exquisite and florid grace of the façade, with its terra-cotta mouldings, suggests the idea of some fairy structure, some palace of pleasure, rather than an asylum for the sick and poor. Although I could not help feeling this want of fitness—for fitness is the first principle of taste—yet as an artist I was struck with admiration of the architectural elegance, and used to stand before it, entranced as by music to the eye. But it is not of the exterior, but of the interior I have now to speak. It is the largest hospital I have ever visited, larger than the *Hôtel-Dieu* at Paris, larger even than the great hospital at Vienna; and contained, on the day I visited it, more than 2500 patients, without reckoning those in the lying-in hospital and the hospital for foundlings and sick children, in connection with it. This large number I was told arose from a very sick season, and the prevalence of cholera: in general the number of patients does not exceed 1500. It belongs to the municipality, and is managed by six governors, each of whom is supreme acting governor for two months in the year.

Forty Sisters of Charity and their Superior, with a large staff of female assistants, managed the nursing.

Had I been content, like other travellers, with admiring and studying the beautiful architecture, I should have brought away a pleasanter impression of this great hospital; but the interior disappointed me. It seemed to me *too* large, too crowded, and the management not quite satisfactory. It is the most richly endowed hospital in all Europe, and yet they say that it is deeply in debt. The change of government every two months must be injurious. I had not time to go into details, but would recommend those who are interested in such matters to study the administrative arrangements of this great hospital, and see where the good and the evil may lie. It is a great medical school.

I had, when in Piedmont, particular opportunities for learning the state of feeling in regard to the service of the hospitals, and it deserves some consideration.

A great number of the medical students were in open opposition to the Sisters employed in the hospitals, and on inquiring I found that this opposition arose from various causes. In the first place, it was generally allowed that there is a great laxity of morals—I might give it a harder name—prevalent among the medical students in Turin as elsewhere, and that the influence of these religious women, the strict order and surveillance exercised and enforced by them wherever they ruled, is in the highest degree distasteful to those young men: more especially the protection afforded by the Sisters to the poor young female patients, when convalescent, or after leaving the hospitals, had actually excited a feeling against them; though as women, and as religious women, one might think that this was a duty, and not the least sacred of their duties.

This adverse feeling took the colour of liberalism.

Now I had, and have, an intense sympathy with the Piedmontese, in their brave struggle for political and religious independence; but I cannot help wishing and hoping that the reform, in both cases, may be carried out in the progressive, not in the destructive spirit; and, thanks to those enlightened men who guide the councils of Piedmont, and who do not "mistake reverse of wrong for right," it has hitherto been so.

It will be remembered that the Sisters of Charity were

excepted when other religious orders were suppressed ; and, in consequence it was a sort of fashion with an ultra party to consider them as part of an ecclesiastical *régime*, which had been identified with all the evils of tyranny, ignorance, and priestly domination. This feeling was subsiding when I was there. The heroism of the sixty-two Sisters of Charity, who had accompanied the Piedmontese armies to the East, and of their Superior, Madame de Cordera, had excited in the public mind a degree of enthusiasm which silenced the vulgar and short-sighted opposition of a set of dissipated, thoughtless boys.

One thing more had occurred which struck me. A few months before my arrival, and as a part of this medical agitation, a petition or protest had been drawn up by the medical students and the young men who served in the apothecaries' shops, against the small dispensaries and infirmaries which the Sisters had of their own for the poor, and for children. The plea was, *not* that their infirmaries were ill-served or that the medicines were ill-compounded, or that any mistakes had occurred from ignorance or unskilfulness, but that this small medical practice, unpaid and beneficent, "took the bread out of the men's mouths." Before we laugh at this short-sighted folly and cruelty, which supposes that the interests of the two sexes can possibly be antagonistic instead of being inseparably bound up together, we must recollect that we have had some specimens of the same feeling in our own country ; as for instance, the opposition to the national female school of design, and the steady opposition of the inferior part of the medical profession to all female practitioners. That some departments of medicine are peculiarly suited to women is beginning to strike the public mind. I know that there are enlightened and distinguished physicians both here and in France, who take this view of the subject, though the medical profession as a body entertain a peculiar dread of all innovation, which they resist with as much passive pertinacity as boards of guardians and London Corporations.*

* In the Memoirs of Lord Cockburn, we have an edifying instance of the extent to which professional habits of thinking may unconsciously verge on prejudice the most absurd and cruel :—"In 1800, the people of Edinburgh were much occupied about the removal of an evil in the
 of their infirmary ; which evil, though strenuously defended by

Before I leave Piedmont, I must mention two more hospitals, because of the contrast they afford, which will aptly illustrate the principle I am endeavouring to advocate.

The hospital of St. John at Vercelli, which I had the opportunity of inspecting minutely, left a strong impression on my mind. At the time I visited it, it contained nearly 400 patients. There was besides, in an adjacent building, a school and hospital for poor children. The whole interior economy of these two hospitals was under the management of eighteen women, with a staff of assistants both male and female. The Superior, a very handsome, intelligent woman, had been trained at Paris, and had presided over the provincial hospital for eleven years. There was the same cheerfulness which I have had occasion to remark in all institutions where the religious and feminine elements were allowed to influence the material administration; and every thing was exquisitely clean, airy, and comfortable. In this instance the dispensary (*Pharmacie*) was managed by apothecaries, and not by the women.

Now, in contrast with this hospital, I will describe a famous hospital at Turin. It is a recent building, with all the latest improvements, and considered, in respect to fitness for its purpose, as a *chef-d'œuvre* of architecture. The contrivances and material appliances for the sick and convalescent were exhibited to me as the wonder and boast of the city; certainly they were most ingenious. The management was in the hands of a committee of gentlemen; under them a numerous staff of priests and physicians. Two or three female servants of the lower class were sweeping and cleaning. In the convalescent

able men, it is difficult now to believe could ever have existed. The medical officers consisted at that time of the whole members of the colleges of physicians and of surgeons, who attended the hospital by monthly rotation: so that the patients had the chance of an opposite treatment, according to the whim of the doctor, every thirty days. Dr. James Gregory, whose learning extended beyond that of his profession, attacked this absurdity in one of his powerful, but wild and personable quarto pamphlets. The public was entirely on his side, and so at last were the managers, who resolved that the medical officers should be appointed permanently, as they have ever since been. Most of the medical profession, including the whole private lecturers, and even the two colleges, who all held that the power of annoying the patients in their turn was their right, were vehement against this innovation; and some of them went to law in opposition to it."

wards I saw a great deal of card-playing. All was formal, cold, clean, and silent; no cheerful, kindly faces, no soft low voices, no light active figures were hovering round. I left the place with a melancholy feeling, shared as I found by those who were with me. One of them, an accomplished physician, felt and candidly acknowledged the want of female influence here.

One of the directors of the great military hospital at Turin told me that he regarded it as one of the best deeds of his life, that he had recommended, and carried through, the employment of the Sisters of Charity in this institution. Before the introduction of these ladies, the sick soldiers had been nursed by orderlies sent from the neighbouring barracks—men chosen because they were unfit for other work. The most rigid discipline was necessary to keep them in order; and the dirt, neglect, and general immorality were frightful. Any change was, however, resisted by the military and medical authorities, till the invasion of the cholera: then the orderlies became, most of them, useless, distracted, and almost paralysed with terror. Some devoted Sisters of Charity were introduced in a moment of perplexity and panic; then all went well—propriety, cleanliness, and comfort prevailed. "No day passes," said my informant, "that I do not bless God for the change which I was the humble instrument of accomplishing in this place!"

Very similar was the information I received relative to the naval hospital at Genoa; but I had not the opportunity of visiting it.

Another excellent hospital at Turin, that of St. John, contained, when I visited it, 400 patients, a nearly equal number of men and women. There were, besides, a separate ward for sick children, and two wards containing about sixty "incurables"—the bedridden and helpless poor, of the same class which find refuge in our workhouses. The whole of this large establishment was under the management of twenty-two religious women, with a staff of about forty-five assistants, men and women, and a large number of medical men and students. All was clean, and neat, and cheerful. I was particularly struck by the neatness with which the food was served; men brought it up in large trays, but the ladies themselves distributed

it. Some friends of the poor sick were near the beds: I remember being touched by the sight of a little dog which, with its fore-paws resting on the bed and a pathetic wistful expression in its drooping face, kept its eyes steadfastly fixed on the sick man; a girl was kneeling beside him, to whom one of the Sisters was speaking words of comfort.

In this hospital and others I have found an excellent arrangement for the night-watch: it was a large sentry-box of an octagon-shape, looking each way, the upper part all of glass, but furnished with curtains: and on a kind of dresser or table were arranged writing materials, all kinds of medicine and restoratives which might be required in haste, and a supply of linen, napkins, &c. Here two Sisters watched all night long; here the accounts were kept and the private business of the wards carried on in the daytime: a certain degree of privacy was thus secured for the ladies on duty when necessary. The Superior, whom we should call the matron, was an elderly woman, wearing the same simple convenient religious dress as the others, and only recognised by the large bunch of keys at her girdle.

The Marchese Alfieri, one of the governors of the *Hospice de la Maternité*, described to me in terms of horror the state in which he had found the establishment when under the management of a board of governors who employed hired matrons and nurses. At last, in despair, he sent for some trained Sisters, ten of whom, with a Superior, now directed the whole in that spirit of order, cheerfulness, and unremitting attention, which belongs to them. The Marchese particularly dwelt on their economy. "We cannot," said he, "give them unlimited means (*des fonds à discretion*), for these good ladies think that all should go to the poor; but if we allow them a fixed sum, we find they can do more with that sum than we could have believed possible, and they never go beyond it: they are admirable accountants and economists."

In a recent visit to Italy (1857, 1858), want of health precluded me from making inquiries; and yet more from substantiating them by the testimony of my own eyes: therefore I will say little, though some observation may have interest as bearing on the present theme and

the existing state of things. I found in Italy rather a feeling of suspicion towards the religious orders of charitable women, as instruments of the priesthood. I found the young men vulgarised by the want of refined female society, even to a greater degree than among ourselves. When I have heard the Italian Liberals denouncing the feminine influences used against them, I have expressed astonishment why, if the influence were allowed to be powerful, they did not make some effort to have it on their side in a higher and better form? With regard to the female management in the hospitals, it had been found indispensable: yet, except among the Sisters of St. Vincent de Paul, there was a want of good training, and these *Sœurs de Charité*, from their freedom and their ubiquity, being uncloistered, I found especially objects of the popular suspicion, even while the poor had recourse to them in their maladies and their troubles, especially with their children,—the small girls' schools kept by these Sisters being in general the only training for the female children of the lower orders.

In the magnificent hospital at Siena I found that the medical students had, in 1848, succeeded in getting the Sisters expelled; but after a few months they were obliged to be recalled. In their absence the internal economy of the hospital had fallen into almost "cureless ruin." I found the nursing department in the hands of twenty-six Sisters; and I found two of these energetic women standing, with a pile of prescriptions before them, preparing the medicines, and distributing them according to the orders of the medical officers; and the women were found perhaps as delicate, as experienced, and as conscientious as any apothecaries' boys. But the circumstances under which they had been expelled and then brought back did not, I fancy, contribute to the harmonious working of the male and female officials in this instance. The ventilation and cleanliness were perfect, and in point of situation and general arrangement I have seen nothing superior to this fine hospital. It forms one side of the square, in which stands the beautiful cathedral, and the palace fills up the other side. This propinquity suggests many thoughts; but once I saw these associations brought into a peculiarly picturesque, and I might say, fearful contrast. It was when the Grand Duke of Tuscany

entertained the Pope on his progress in August, 1857. I stood that evening on the marble steps of the Duomo: the palace was gaily illuminated. Guards were drawn up before the entrance, and a band of music was playing; the lights flashed on the equipages of the high ecclesiastics and on their purple and scarlet costumes, and on the glittering orders and accoutrements of the civil and military officers who were gathered to be presented to his Holiness: outside the guards the people formed a dense, silent crowd. This was the scene on the left hand; opposite, in darkest shadow, stood the hospital. Here and there a single taper, (the watch-light near some bed of suffering) gleamed dimly from the windows. In front of the entrance stood a party of that religious brotherhood, the Misericordia, so familiar to those who have lived at Florence or Siena, whose duty it is to give decent burial to the poor. They stood there, a still, solemn group, in their black robes and masks, waiting till the dead should be brought forth. It appeared:—they lifted the bier on their shoulders; the priest raised his cross, the low funeral chant began, heard distinctly through the clash of the band, and they moved away, the crowd opening for them, some falling on their knees; and thus down the narrow street I watched them disappear, and never perhaps were the pomps and vanities, the miseries and the vicissitudes of life, brought into more close and startling contrast.

I could relate much more of what I have seen in hospitals at home and abroad; but this Lecture is intended to be suggestive only, and for this purpose I have said enough. Yet, before I pass on to another part of my subject, I must be allowed to make one or two observations on the testimony before me relative to the moral and medical efficiency of the lady-nurses sent to the East.

In the midst of many differences of opinion, in one thing all are agreed: all to whom I have spoken, without one exception, bear witness to the salutary influence exercised by the lady-nurses over the men, and the submission and gratitude of the patients. In the most violent attacks of fever and delirium, when the orderlies could not hold them down in their beds, the mere presence of one of these ladies, instead of being exciting, had the effect of instantly calming the spirits and subduing the most refractory. It is allowed

also that these ladies had the power to repress swearing and bad and coarse language; to prevent the smuggling of brandy and raki into the wards; to open the hearts of the sullen and desperate to contrition and responsive kindness. The facts are recorded, and remain uncontradicted; but the natural inference to be drawn from them does not seem to have struck our medical men.

With regard to the feeling between the nurses and the patients, here is a page of testimony from one of the nurses, which can hardly be read without emotion.

"We have attended many hundreds of the sick in the British army, suffering under every form of disease—the weary, wasting, low typhus fever or dysentery; or the agonies of the frost bite; and they were surrounded by every accumulation of misery. For the fevered lips there was no cooling drink, for the sinking frame no strengthening food, for the wounded limb no soft pillow, for many no watchful hands to help; but never did we hear a murmur pass their lips. Those whose privilege it was to nurse them noticed only obedience to orders, respectful gratitude, patience, and the most self-denying consideration for those who ministered. Even when in an apparently dying state they would look up in our faces and smile."

She adds in another place, with deep natural feeling, "It was so sad to see them die one after another; we learned to love them so!"

"We were trained," she says, "under the hospital nurses at home, receiving our instructions from them; and what we saw *there* of disobedience to medical orders and cruelty to patients would fill pages, and make you shudder. More of evil language was heard in one hour in a London hospital than met my ears during months in a military one."

The drawbacks in regard to our volunteer ladies were not want of sense nor want of zeal, but the want of robust health, experience, and sufficient training.

The experiment of a staff of the volunteer lady-nurses from St. John's House*, with paid and trained nurses under their orders, has lately been made in King's College Hospital. I think I may say that it has so far succeeded.

* The training institution for nurses, in Queen Square, Westminster.

I have the testimony of one of the gentlemen filling a high official situation at the hospital, (and who was at first opposed to the introduction of these ladies, or at least most doubtful of their success,) that they have up to this time succeeded; that strong prejudices have been overcome, that there has been a purifying and harmonising influence at work since their arrival. The testimony borne by the ladies themselves to the courtesy of the medical men and the students, and the entire harmony with which they now work together, struck me even more.

The same conquest was obtained by the volunteer ladies in the Crimea. One of them says, "So misrepresented were the army-surgeons that the Sisters and Ladies feared them more than any other horrors." "We were told to expect rebuff, discouragement, even insult. We never during this whole year experienced any other than assistance, encouragement, gentlemanly treatment, and, from many, the most cordial kindness." -Of course there were some exceptions, but this was to be expected; and in reference to the principle for which I am now pleading, "the communion of labour," I consider this testimony very satisfactory.

PRISONS.

I MUST now say a few words with regard to female administration in prisons.

After the revelations made by Howard seventy or eighty years ago, and their immediate effect in rousing the attention and sympathy of Europe, one would have thought it impossible to fall back into the ghastly horrors he had discovered and exposed. Yet in 1816, his name was already almost forgotten. The acts of parliament he had procured were become a dead letter, were openly and grossly violated. The very slow progress made by moral influences in the last century is very striking, taken in connection with the cold and formal scepticism which then found favour with men who fancied themselves philosophers, but were only leading a popular reaction against the formal theological superstitions of the previous century. There was indeed, with much intellectual movement, a deadness of feeling; an

indifference to the well-being of the masses, an utterly low standard of principle, religious, moral, political, which in these days of a more awakened public conscience seems hardly conceivable. We make slow work of it now; we want a higher standard in high places; but in this at least we are improved,—men do not *now* dispute that such or such things ought to be done, may be done, must be done; unhappily they do dispute endlessly as to the how, the when, and the where, till they defeat their own purposes, allow great principles to be shelved by wretched perplexities of detail, and shrink back, cowed by the passive, stolid resistance of ignorance and self-interest. Forty years after the publication of Howard's "State of Prisons," what was the state of the greatest prison in England? When Elizabeth Fry ventured into that "den of wild beasts," as it was called, the female ward in Newgate, about 300 women were found crammed together, begging, swearing, drinking, fighting, gambling, dancing, and dressing up in men's clothes, and two jailors set to watch them, who stood jeering at the door, literally afraid to enter. Elizabeth Fry would have been as safe in the men's wards as among her own sex; she would certainly have exercised there an influence as healing, as benign, as redeeming; but she did well in the first instance, and in the *then* state of public feeling, to confine her efforts to the miserable women.*

I know that there are many persons who would receive with a laugh of scorn or a shudder of disgust, the idea of having virtuous, religious, refined, well-educated women, brought into contact with wretched and depraved prisoners of the other sex. It would even be more revolting than the idea of a born lady—a Florence Nightingale, or a Miss Anderson, or a Miss Shaw Stewart—nursing a wounded soldier, appeared only two years ago. Yet this is precisely what I wish to see tried. Captain Maconochie mentions the influence which his wife exercised over the most hardened

* The Act of Parliament procured through Mrs. Fry's influence, ordered the appointment of matrons and female officers in all our prisons; but no provision has been made for their proper training, nor are the qualifications at all defined.

My idea is that, besides a superior order of female superintendents, we should have lady visitors also, as it is like an infusion of fresh life and energy; but I do not think that such visiting should be confined to the male wards.

and horrible criminals, the convicts at Norfolk Island : because she was fearless, and gentle, and a *woman*, those men respected her—they who respected nothing else in heaven or earth. It was something like the sanitary influence which the surgeon's wife exercised over the cholera patients in a military hospital, and which I mentioned in my former Lecture.* Such instances might be multiplied ;—indeed many such cases are matters of notoriety ; but so far as I can see, they are always regarded as the consequence of accident, not the result of an essential law ; they have led to no farther experiments, and no inference to guide us systematically has been drawn from them.

In my Lecture last year I mentioned the employment of trained Sisters of Charity in some of the prisons of Piedmont. When I was there a few months ago, I obtained, by the courtesy of our ambassador, a written memorandum of the rules and regulations applied to them, the conditions under which they were employed, and the price paid for their services to the religious institutions they belonged to. I think it unnecessary to give here the twenty-three articles of this regulation, which would not be applicable, at least only partially applicable, in this country. It appears that twenty-eight of these ladies are employed in five reformatory prisons (one of which is for females, the others for men), and that eight of the other prisons (*Carceri giudiziarie*) are partly administered by the "*Suore*," but the number was not fixed in each prison.

In the general Report on the condition of the prisons, addressed to the Minister of the Interior, I found this paragraph, which I translate from the original Italian :—

"It is an indisputable fact that the prisons which are served by the Sisters are the best ordered, the most cleanly, and in all respects the best regulated in the country ; hence it is to be desired that the number should be increased ; and this is the more desirable because where the Sisters are not established, the criminal women are under the charge of jailors of the other sex, which ought not to be tolerated."

To this I add the testimony of the Minister himself from a private communication. "Not only have we experienced the advantage of employing the Sisters of Charity in the prisons, in the supervision of the details, in distributing

* "*Sisters of Charity*," p. 59.

food, preparing medicines, and nursing the sick in the infirmaries; but we find that the influence of these ladies on the minds of the prisoners, when recovering from sickness, has been productive of the greatest benefit, as leading to permanent reform in many cases and a better frame of mind always: for this reason, among others, we have given them every encouragement."^{*}

Among the other reasons alluded to, the greater economy of the management was a principal one. It is admitted, even by those who are opposed to them, that in the administration of details these women can always make a given sum go much farther than the paid officials of the other sex. I must add that, in some of the prisons mentioned to me, canteens were allowed, where the prisoners, besides their rations, might purchase various indulgences. These canteens were placed under the direction of the Sisters; but as they protested against the sale of wine and brandy to the prisoners, except when medically prescribed, some disagreement arose between them and the other officials, and I do not know how it terminated.

Even at the risk of wearying you with this part of my subject, I will venture to describe, as briefly as I can, a certain reformatory prison of a very unusual kind, and which left a strong impression on my mind of the good that may be effected by very simple means. A prison governed chiefly by women—and the women as well as the men who directed it responsible only to the Government, and not merely subordinate like the female officers in our prisons—was a singular spectacle; and I hope it will be distinctly understood that in describing what I have seen, it is not with any idea that these arrangements could be, or ought to be, *exactly* imitated among us. I only suggest the facts as illustrative of the principle I advocate, and as worthy of the consideration of humane and philosophic thinkers.

This prison at Neudorf is an experiment which as yet has only had a three years' trial, but it has so completely succeeded up to this time that they are preparing to organise eleven other prisons on the same plan. From a

^{*} In my former lecture, "Sisters of Charity," I have alluded to the employment of women in the prisons of Piedmont. My visit to Turin in November 1855, confirmed by personal knowledge and inquiry the testimony already received on this point.

conversation I had with one of the Government officers, I could understand that the economy of the administration is a strong recommendation, as well as the moral success. Its origin is worth mentioning. It began by the efforts made by two humane ladies to find a refuge for those wretched creatures of their own sex who, after undergoing their term of punishment, were cast out of the prisons. These ladies, not finding at hand any persons prepared to carry out their views, sent to France for two women of a religious order which was founded for the reformation of lost and depraved women; and two of the Sisters were sent from Angers accordingly. After a while this small institution attracted the notice of the Government. It was taken in hand officially, enlarged, and organised as a prison as well as a penitentiary; the original plan being strictly adhered to, and the same management retained.

At the time that I visited it, this prison consisted of several different buildings and a large garden enclosed by high walls. The inmates were divided into three classes completely separated. The first were the criminals, the most desperate characters, brought there from the prisons at Vienna, and the very refuse of those prisons. They had been brought there six or eight at a time, fettered hand and foot, and guarded by soldiers and policemen.

The second class, drafted from the first, were called the penitents; they were allowed to assist in the house, to cook, and to wash, and to work in the garden, which last was a great boon. There were more than fifty of this class.

The third class were the voluntaries, those who, when their term of punishment and penitence had expired, preferred remaining in the house, and were allowed to do so. They were employed in work of which a part of the profit was retained for their benefit. There were about twelve or fourteen of this class. The whole number of criminals then in the prison exceeded 200, and they expected more the next day.

To manage these unhappy, disordered, perverted creatures, there were twelve women, assisted by three chaplains, a surgeon, and a physician: none of the men resided in the house, but visited it every day. The soldiers and police officers, who had been sent in the first instance as guards and jailors, had been dismissed. The dignity, good sense,

patience, and tenderness of this female board of management were extraordinary. The ventilation and the cleanliness were perfect; while the food, beds, and furniture were of the very coarsest kind. The medical supervision was important, where there was as much disease—of frightful, physical disease—as there was of moral disease, crime, and misery. There was a surgeon and physician, who visited daily. There was a dispensary, under the care of two Sisters who acted as chief nurses and apothecaries. One of these was busy with the sick, the other went round with me. She was a little, active woman, not more than two or three and thirty, with a most cheerful face and bright, kind, dark eyes. She had been two years in the prison, and had previously received a careful training of five years—three years in the general duties of her vocation, and two years of medical training. She spoke with great intelligence of the differences of individual temperament, requiring a different medical and moral treatment.

The Sister who superintended the care of the criminals was the oldest I saw, and she was bright-looking also. The Superior, who presided over the whole establishment, had a serious look, and a pale, care-worn, but perfectly mild and dignified face.

The difference between the countenances of those criminals who had lately arrived, and those who had been admitted into the class of penitents, was extraordinary. The first were either stupid, gross, and vacant, or absolutely frightful from the predominance of evil propensities. The latter were at least humanised.

When I expressed my astonishment that so small a number of women could manage such a set of wild and wicked creatures, the answer was "If we want assistance we shall have it; but it is as easy with our system to manage two hundred or three hundred as one hundred or fifty." She then added devoutly, "The power is not in ourselves, it is granted from above." It was plain that she had the most perfect faith in that power, and in the text which declared all things possible to faith.

We must bear in mind that here men and women were acting together; that in all the regulations, religious and sanitary, there was mutual aid, mutual respect, an interchange of experience; but the women were subordinate

only to the chief civil and ecclesiastical authority; the internal administration rested with them.

I hope it will be remembered here, and in other parts of this essay, that I am not arguing for any particular system of administration, or discipline, or kind or degree of punishment; but merely for this principle, that whatever be the system selected as the best, it should be carried out by a due admixture of female influence and management combined with the man's government.*

REFORMATORY SCHOOLS.

If what I have said of the salutary effects of female influence in prisons carry any weight, yet more does it apply to the employment of superior women in the Reformatory schools for young criminals. Profligate boys, accustomed to see only the most coarse and depraved women (their own female relatives are in general examples of the worst class), would be especially touched and tamed by the mere presence of a better order of women. I observe that in the last report of the school at Mettrai, mention is made of the nine Sisters of Charity who are employed to superintend the kitchen and infirmary; which last consists of a ward with about ten beds, and a corridor where the Sisters receive the out-patients; and to the constant watchfulness, medical skill, and gentle influence of these women much good is attributed.

Mr. F. Hill, in his work on Crime, in speaking of the officials in the reformatory prisons for boys, says expressly that some of these officials ought to be women "for the sake of female influence, and to call into action those family feelings, which Mr. Sidney Turner and Miss Carpenter think of such vital importance in the process of reformation." This is precisely the principle for which I am pleading, and in organising the new reformatory institutions it might be advantageously kept in view.

"It should be remembered," adds Mr. Hill, "that up to the time of his commitment, a criminal has often had

* Since this was written the prisons at Brixton and Fulham, mentioned in the introductory letter, have been organised under female management.

no one to give him counsel or sympathy, no virtuous parent or kind relative to feel for him or guide him aright, and that there is consequently in his case a void which is perhaps first filled up by a kind prison officer. This may account for the almost filial affection often shown, particularly by the younger prisoners, towards a good governor, chaplain, or matron." What we have now to do is to enlarge the application of this principle.

The extreme difficulty of finding masters at the best of all our reformatory schools, that at Redhill, was the subject discussed in a meeting of benevolent and intelligent men, interested in this institution. I happened to be present. I heard the qualifications for a master to be set over these unhappy little delinquents thus described:—He must have great tenderness and kindness of heart, great power of calling forth and sympathising with the least manifestations of goodness or hopefulness; quick perception of character; great firmness, and judgment, and command of temper; skill in some handicraft, as carpentering and gardening; a dignified or at least attractive presence, and good manners,—the personal qualities and appearance being found of consequence to impress the boys with respect. Now it is just possible that all these rare and admirable qualities, some of which God has given in a larger degree to the woman and others to the man, might be found combined in one man; but such a man has not yet been met with, and many such would hardly be found for a stipend of 30*l.* or 40*l.* a year. Then, in this dilemma, instead of insisting on a combination of the *paternal* and the *maternal* qualifications in one person, might it not be possible, by associating some well educated and well trained women in the administration of these schools, to produce the required influences—the tenderness, the sympathy, the superior manners, and refined deportment on one hand, and the firmness and energy, the manly government, and skill in handicrafts and gardening, on the other? This solution was not proposed by any one of the gentlemen who spoke; it did not seem to occur to any one present; and yet is it not worth consideration? At all events I must express my conviction that, going on as they are now doing, without the combination of those influences which ought to represent in such a com-

munity the maternal and sisterly, as well as the paternal and fraternal, relations of the home, their efforts will be in vain: their admirable institution will fall to pieces sooner or later, and people will attribute such a result to every possible cause except the real one.

PENITENTIARIES AND HOUSES OF REFUGE.

THE reformatory schools for perverted and criminal girls present many more difficulties than those for boys. I do not know how it is intended to meet these especial difficulties, nor what consideration has as yet been given to them, nor in whose hands the administration of these reformatory schools is to be placed; for all I have as yet heard upon the subject, and all the pamphlets and authorities I have been able to consult, have reference principally to the treatment of delinquent boys, and very little mention is made of the poor female children of the "perishing and dangerous class"—(*perishing and dangerous* in every sense of these words they too surely are!). One thing is most certain, that in their case the supervision of pure-minded, humane, intelligent, and experienced men will be as necessary as the feminine element in the reformatory schools for boys; and for similar reasons, medical knowledge will be required in addition to the moral and religious influences. This has, I think, obtained too little consideration, and it is one of great importance.

It is worth noticing that a proposal, made during this session of parliament*, to aid the female penitentiaries by a grant of public money, however small, and thus obtain from the government the mere recognition of the existence of such institutions and their necessity, fell to the ground; even the usual deprecatory intimation that it would be "considered and brought forward next session,"—the common device by which troublesome propositions are stifled or shuffled off,—was not here vouchsafed: the motion was received with absolute silence, and set aside by a few words from the speaker.

I can conceive that there might be many reasons for this

* July 15, 1856.

reluctance to discuss such themes officially. It might not only offend the nice decorum of our House of Commons ; it might perhaps awaken in some generous and conscientious mind, a keener touch of retrospective pity, a more acute and self-reproachful pain. Let us, therefore, set the past aside ; let us accept the excuse that a far lower standard of feeling and opinion existed on this miserable subject some years ago ; and let us think with gratitude of the more hopeful present, of the wiser and better future which we may anticipate both for men and women.

And since these female reformatories must eventually find their place among the public exigencies to be considered, one may ask, what makes the case of poor, depraved, delinquent girls far worse in itself, far more difficult to deal with, far more hopeless altogether, than that of depraved delinquent boys ? How is it that, below the lowest class of men, there is a lower class of women, abased by the total loss of self-respect, and perverse from a sense of perpetual wrong ? It is so, we are told ; but why is it so ? Does it arise from the greater delicacy of the organisation—from the perpetual outrage to the *nature* of the creature thus sacrificed ? I cannot go into these questions at present. I must leave them to be considered and settled by such of our medical men and our clergy who may be—what all of them ought to be—what our Saviour was on earth—moralists and philosophers ; for these questions are of the deepest import, and must be settled sooner or later. Meantime it is allowed that the female reformatories now existing are utterly insignificant and inadequate in comparison to the existing amount of evil and misery ; it is allowed that they present peculiar and unmanageable difficulties, that they are not successful, even the best of them. You hear it said that a hundredfold of the money, the labour, expended on them ought not to be regarded as thrown away, if but *one* soul out of twenty were redeemed from perdition. All very proper and very pious. But how is it that in this case nineteen souls out of the twenty are supposed to be consigned to a perdition past cure, past hope, past help ? The truth is, that it is not merely the peculiar difficulties, nor the horror of corrupting influences, which interpose to prevent success : it is the incredible

rashness and almost incredible mistakes of those who ignorantly, but in perfect good faith and self-complacency, undertake a task which requires all the aid of long training, experience, and knowledge, combined with the impulses of benevolence, the support of religious faith,—and, I will add, a genuine vocation such as I have seen in some characters.

When I was at Turin, I visited an institution for the redemption of “unfortunate girls” (as they call themselves*, poor creatures!), which appeared to me peculiarly successful. I did not consider it perfect, nor could all its details be imitated here. Yet some of the *natural* principles, recognised and carried out, appeared to me most important. It seemed to have achieved for female victims and delinquents what Mettrai has done for those of the other sex.

This institution (called at Turin *il Refugio*, the Refuge) was founded nearly thirty years ago by a “good Christian,” whose name was not given to me, but who still lives, a very old man. When his means were exhausted he had recourse to the Marquise de Barol, who has from that time devoted her life, and the greater part of her possessions, to the objects of this institution.

In the Memoirs of Mrs. Fry† there may be found a letter which Madame de Barol addressed to her on the subject of this institution and its objects, when it had existed for three or four years only. The letter is dated 1829, and is very interesting. Madame de Barol told me candidly, in 1855, that in the commencement she had made mistakes: she had been too severe. It had required twenty years of reflection, experience, and the most able assistance, to work out her purposes.

The institution began on a small scale with few inmates: it now covers a large space of ground, and several ranges of buildings for various departments, all connected, and yet most carefully separated. There are several distinct gardens

* If you ask a good-looking girl in an hospital, or the infirmary of a workhouse, what is her condition of life, she will perhaps answer, “If you please, ma’am, I’m an unfortunate girl,” in a tone of languid indifference, as if it were a profession like any other. If she were to answer, “If you please, ma’am, I’m a social evil,” it would mean the same thing, and the one denomination would be as true as the other.

† Vol. ii. p. 89.

enclosed by these buildings, and the green trees and flowers give an appearance of cheerfulness to the whole.

There is, first, a refuge for casual and extreme wretchedness. A certificate from a priest or a physician is required, but often dispensed with. I saw a child brought into this place by its weeping and despairing mother—a child about ten years old, and in a fearful state. There was no certificate in this case, but the wretched little creature was taken in at once. There is an infirmary admirably managed by a good physician and two medical Sisters of a religious order. There are also convalescent wards. These parts of the building are kept separate, and the inmates carefully classed, all the younger patients being in a separate ward.

In the penitentiary and schools, forming the second department, the young girls and children are kept distinct from the elder ones, and those who had lately entered from the others. I saw about twenty girls under the age of fifteen, but only a few together in one room. Only a few were tolerably handsome; many looked intelligent and kindly. In one of these rooms I found a tame thrush hopping about, and I remember a girl with a soft face crumbling some bread for it, saved from her dinner. Reading, writing, plain work, and embroidery are taught, also cooking, and other domestic work. A certain number assisted by rotation in the large, lightsome kitchens, and the general service of the house, but not till they had been there some months, and had received badges for good conduct. There are three gradations of these badges of merit, earned by various terms of probation. It was quite clear to me that these badges were worn with pleasure: whenever I fixed my eyes upon the little bits of red or blue ribbon, attached to the dress, and smiled approbation, I was met by a responsive smile—sometimes by a deep, modest blush. The third and highest order of merit, which was a certificate of good conduct and steady industry during three years at least, conferred the privilege of entering an order destined to nurse the sick in the infirmary, or entrusted to keep order in the small classes. They had also a still higher privilege. And now I come to a part of the institution which excited my strongest sympathy and admiration. Appended to it is an infant hospital for the children of the very lowest orders—children born diseased or deformed, or

maimed by accidents,—epileptic or crippled. In this hospital were thirty-two poor suffering infants, carefully tended by such of the penitents as had earned this privilege. On a rainy day I found these poor little things taking their daily exercise in a long airy corridor. Over the clean shining floor was spread temporarily a piece of coarse grey druggat that their feet might not slip; and so they were led along, creeping, crawling, or trying to walk or run, with bandaged heads and limbs—carefully and tenderly helped and watched by the nurses, who were themselves under the supervision of one of the religious Sisters already mentioned.

There is a good dispensary, well supplied with common medicines, and served by a well instructed Sister of Charity, with the help of one of the inmates whom she had trained.

Any inmate is free to leave the Refuge whenever she pleases, and may be received a second time, but not a third time.

I was told that when these girls leave the institution, after a probation of three or four years, there is no difficulty in finding them good places, as servants, cooks, washerwomen, and even nurses; but all do not leave it. Those who, after a residence of six years, preferred to remain, might do so: they were devoted to a religious and laborious life, and lived in a part of the building which had a sort of conventual sanctity and seclusion. They are styled "*les Madeleines*" (Magdalens). I saw sixteen of such; and I had the opportunity of observing them. They were all superior in countenance and organisation, and belonged apparently to a better class. They were averse to re-entering the world, had been disgusted and humiliated by their bitter experience of vice, and disliked or were unfitted for servile occupations. They had a manufactory of artificial flowers, were skilful embroiderers and needlewomen, and supported themselves by the produce of their work. They were no longer objects of pity or dependent on charity: they had become objects of respect—and more than respect, of reverence. One of them who had a talent for music, Madame de Barol had caused to be properly instructed: she was the organist of the chapel and the music mistress: she had taught several of her companions to sing. A piano stood in the centre of the room, and they

executed a little concert for us: everything was done easily and quietly, without effort or display. When I looked in the faces of these young women—the eldest was not more than thirty—so serene, so healthful, and in some instances so dignified, I found it difficult to recall the depth of misery, degradation and disease out of which they had risen.

The whole number of inmates was about 140, without reckoning the thirty-two sick children. Madame de Barol said that this infant hospital was a most efficient means of thorough reform; it called out what was best in the disposition of the penitents, and was indeed a test of the character and temper.*

If this institution had been more in the country, and if some of the penitents (or patients), whose robust *physique* seemed to require it, could have been provided with plenty of work in the open air, such as gardening, keeping cows or poultry, &c., I should have considered the arrangements, for a Catholic country, perfect. They are calculated to fulfil all the conditions of moral and physical convalescence; early rising; regular, active, *useful* employment; thorough cleanliness; the strictest order; an even, rather cool temperature; abundance of light and fresh air; and more than these, religious hope wisely and kindly cultivated; companionship, cheerfulness, and the opportunity of exercising the sympathetic and benevolent affections.

If these conditions could be adopted in some of the female penitentiaries at home, I think failure would be less common; but since the difficulty of redemption is found to be so great,

* The above account of the Penitentiary at Turin, is from memoranda made on the spot, and from verbal information in November 1855.

I have since received (while this sheet is going through the press) a letter from a very accomplished and benevolent ecclesiastic, containing some farther particulars relative to Madame de Barol's Institution. It appears that the number of inmates is at present 200.

The Refuge itself, and the ground on which it stands, were purchased by the Government, after Madame de Barol had expended a large sum of money in the original arrangements. The Government granted 10,000 francs a year to the necessary expenses, and have since made over the Penitentiary to the Commonalty of Turin; but the hospital for the children, and the convent with the gardens adjoining, have been erected on land belonging to Madame de Barol, and at her sole expense. The infant hospital contains 80 beds. The whole institution is managed by Madame de Barol, and she has the entire control of the funds which the city has placed at her disposal in addition to those contributed by herself.

should we not take the more thought for prevention? Among the causes of the evil are some which I should not like to touch upon here: but there are others, and not the least important, which may be discussed without offence. The small payment and the limited sphere of employment allotted to the women of the working classes are mentioned by a competent witness as one of the causes of vice leading to crime. "Much I believe would be done towards securing the virtue of the female sex, and therefore towards the general diminution of profligacy, if the practical injustice were put an end to by which women are excluded from many kinds of employment for which they are naturally qualified. The general monopoly which the members of the stronger sex have established for themselves is surely most unjust, and, like all other kinds of injustice, recoils on its perpetrators."* The same writer observes in another place:—"The payment for the labour of females in this country is often so small as to demand, for obtaining an honest living, a greater power of endurance and self-control than can reasonably be expected."

Here then is the direct testimony of an experienced man, that the more we can employ women in work fitted to their powers, the stronger the barrier we shall oppose to misery and intemperance, and more especially to that pestilence "which walketh in darkness," and to which we can hardly bring ourselves to give a name.

WORKHOUSES.

I COME now to an institution peculiar to ourselves; and truly can I affirm that if ever the combination of female with masculine supervision were imperatively needed, it is in an English parish workhouse. Really it is not without a mingled feeling of shame and fear that I approach the subject. I shall be told that it is very un-English; very unpatriotic to expose our social delinquencies particularly as I have just been praising some foreign institutions. It is not an excuse for us that on some poor other nations are as bad as ourselves or worse; but it

* "On Crime, its Amount, Causes, and Remedies," by F. Hill, p.

disgrace to us if they are in advance on those very points where publicity and freedom of discussion ought to have shielded us from mistake.

I have seen many workhouses and of all grades. The regulation of details varies in different parishes. Some are admirably clean, and, as far as mere machinery can go, admirably managed; some are dirty and ill ventilated; and one or two, as we learn from recent disclosures, quite in a disgraceful state: but whatever the arrangement and condition, in one thing I found all alike; — the want of a proper moral supervision. I do not say this in the grossest sense; though even in *that* sense, I have known of things I could hardly speak of. But surely I may say there is want of proper *moral* supervision where the most vulgar of human beings are set to rule over the most vulgar; where the pauper is set to manage the pauper; where the ignorant govern the ignorant; where the aged and infirm minister to the aged and infirm; where every softening and elevating influence is absent, or of rare occurrence, and every hardening and depraving influence continuous and ever at hand. Never did I visit any dungeon, any abode of crime or misery, in any country, which left the same crushing sense of sorrow, indignation, and compassion — almost despair — as some of our English workhouses. Never did I see more clearly what must be the inevitable consequences, where the feminine and religious influences are ignored; where what we call charity is worked by a stern, hard machinery; where what we mean for good is not bestowed but inflicted on others, in a spirit not pitiful nor merciful, but reluctant and adverse, if not cruel. Perhaps those who hear me may not all be aware of the origin of our parish workhouses? They were intended to be religious and charitable institutions, to supply the place of those conventual hospitals and charities which with their revenues were suppressed by Henry VIII. For our Reformation I am thankful, as those should be to whom liberty of thought is dear; but I cannot help wishing, with Dr. Arnold, that in our country it had been carried out by purer minds and cleaner hands; that “the badness of the agents had not disgraced the goodness of the cause;” that in rooting up evils and abuses, long rooted charities had not also been torn up. I cannot say that as yet our parish workhouses have replaced them, in

this sense. The epithet *charitable* could never be applied to any parish workhouse I have seen. Our machine charity is as much *charity* in the Christian sense as the praying machines of the Tartars are piety.

The purpose of a workhouse is to be a refuge to the homeless, houseless, helpless poor; to night-wanderers; to orphan children; to the lame and blind; to the aged, who here lie down on their last bed to die.

The number of inmates varies in different parishes at different seasons, from 400 to 1000. In the great London unions it is generally from 500 to 2000. In the Liverpool workhouse the number is often as high as 3000.

These institutions are supported by a variable tax, paid so reluctantly, with so little sympathy in its purpose, that the wretched paupers seem to be regarded as a sort of parish locusts sent to devour the substance of the rate-payers, — as the natural enemies of those who are taxed for their subsistence, — almost as criminals; and I have no hesitation in saying that the convicts in some of our jails have more charitable and more respectful treatment than the poor in our workhouses: hence a notion prevails among the working classes that it is better to be a criminal than a pauper; better to go to a jail than a workhouse; and to all appearance it is so.

The administration of the parish funds for the purposes of charity is in the hands of a board of parish officers, who are *elected* — but I do not know on what principle of *selection* — to discharge one of the most sacred trusts that can be exercised by any responsible human being.

Between the poor and their so-called “guardians,” the bond is anything but charity. I have known men among them conscientious and kindly, and willing to give time and trouble; but in a board of guardians the *gentlemen*, that is, the well educated, intelligent, and compassionate, are generally in a minority, and can do little or nothing against the passive resistance to all innovation, the most obdurate prejudices, the most vulgar jealousy. A gentleman who had served the office said to me, “I am really unfit to be a poor-law guardian; I have some vestige of humanity left in me!”

Under these guardians are the officials, who are brought into immediate contact with the poor; a master and a

matron, who keep the accounts, distribute food and clothing, and keep order. Among them, some are respected and loved, others hated or feared; some are kindly and intelligent, others of the lowest grade.* What were the antecedents of these officials, what the qualifications required, and upon whom rested the deep responsibility of the choice, I never clearly understood. In one workhouse the master had been a policeman; in another, the keeper of a small public-house; in another, he had served in the same workhouse as porter. Where the duties are merely mechanical, and nothing required but to work the material machinery of a stringent system, this may answer very well. The subordinates are not of a higher grade, except occasionally the school-masters and school-mistresses, whom I have sometimes found struggling to perform their duties, sometimes quite unfitted for them, and sometimes resigned to routine and despair.

In the wards for the old and the sick, the intense vulgarity, the melancholy dulness, mingled with a strange licence and levity, are dreadful. I attribute both the dulness and the levity to the total absence of the religious and the feminine element.

But you will say, how can the religious element be wanting? Is there not always a chaplain? The chaplain has seemed to me, in such places, rather a religious accident, than a religious element: when most good and zealous, his can be no constant and pervading influence. When he visits a ward to read and pray once a week, perhaps there is decorum in his presence; the oaths, the curses, the vile language

* In an instance which came to my knowledge, the matron of a workhouse, who had many hundreds of poor people under her control, died from the effects of intemperance. In one of the great London workhouses, I met with a master and matron of whom I had heard great praise, as quite exemplary in their calling—"excellent people"—"tried servants of the parish"—"most respectable." They spoke to me with great intelligence of their duties and responsibilities, and the state of the inmates. Nothing could be better than the discipline of the house, so far as it was apparent to guardians and visitors. The man was a candidate for the governorship of one of our chief metropolitan prisons, and showed me with pride a heap of written testimonials as to his character, fitness, &c. Two months afterwards, these same officials were dismissed for robbery to a great extent of the provisions, besides various other misdemeanors. In another large workhouse the paid matron, set to keep order in the ward of disorderly women, was found dead drunk on the floor, and the inmates laughing and jeering at her.

cease, the vulgar strife is silenced—to recommence the moment his back is turned. I know one instance in which the chaplain had been ill for two months, and no one had supplied his place, except for the Sunday services, where the bed-ridden poor cannot attend. I remember an instance in which the chaplain had requested that the poor profligate women might be kept out of his way:—they had indeed shown themselves somewhat obstreperous and irreverent.* I saw, not long ago, a chaplain of a great workhouse so dirty and shabby, that I should have mistaken him for one of the paupers. In doing his duty he would fling a surplice over his dirty, torn coat, kneel down at the entrance of a ward, not even giving himself the trouble to advance to the middle of the room, hurry over two or three prayers, heard from the few beds nearest to him, and then off to another ward. The salary of this priest for the sick and the poor was twenty pounds a year. This, then, is the religious element;—as if religion were not the necessary, inseparable, ever-present, informing spirit of a Christian charitable institution, but rather something extraneous and occasional, to be taken in set doses at set times. To awaken the faith, to rouse the conscience, to heal the broken in spirit, to light up the stupified faculties of a thousand unhappy, ignorant, debased human beings congregated together,—can a chaplain going his weekly rounds suffice for this?

Then as to the feminine element, I will describe it. In a great and well-ordered workhouse, under conscientious management, I visited sixteen wards, in each ward from fifteen to twenty-five sick, aged, bed-ridden, or, as in some cases, idle and helpless poor. In each ward all the assistance given and all the supervision were in the hands of one nurse and a “helper,” both chosen from among the pauper women who were supposed to be the least immoral and drunken. The ages of the nurses might be from sixty-five to eighty; the assistants were younger.† I

* Perhaps he was not so much to blame. “Over the younger women in workhouses authority is powerless; they will not listen to the clergyman, even could he specially address himself to them. I do not know how these are to be reached by any existing means.” Such is the testimony of an exemplary clergyman, a chaplain in a workhouse.

† “The number of inmates under medical treatment in the year 1854 in the London workhouses, was over 50,000, omitting one workhouse

recollect seeing, in a provincial workhouse, a ward in which were ten old women all helpless and bedridden: to nurse them was a decrepit old woman of seventy, lean, and withered, and feeble*; and her assistant was a girl with one eye, and scarcely able to see with the other. In a ward where I found eight paralysed old women, the nurse being equally aged, the helper was a girl who had lost the use of one hand. Only the other day I saw a pauper nurse in a sick ward who had a wooden leg. I remember no cheerful faces: when the features and deportment were not debased by drunkenness, or stupidity, or ill-humour, they were melancholy, or sullen, or bloated, or harsh:—and these are the sisters of charity to whom our sick poor are confided!

In one workhouse the nurses had a penny a week and extra beer; in another the allowance had been a shilling a month, but recently withdrawn by the guardians from motives of economy. The matron told me that while this allowance continued, she could exercise a certain power over the nurses—she could stop their allowance if they did not behave well; now she has no hold on them! In another workhouse, I asked the matron to point out one whom she considered the best conducted and most efficient nurse. She pointed to a crabbed, energetic-looking old woman: “*She is active, and cleanly, and to be depended on so long as we can keep her from drink. But they all drink! Whenever it is their turn to go out for a few hours they come back intoxicated, and have to be put to bed:—put to bed intoxicated in the wards they are set to rule over!*”

The patients often hate the nurses, and have not fear or respect enough to prevent them from returning their bad language and abuse. Of the sort of attention paid to helpless creatures under their care you may perhaps form some idea. I know that in one workhouse a poor woman could get no help but by bribery: any little extra allowance of

(the Marylebone). There are 70 paid nurses, and 500 pauper nurses and assistants. One half of these nurses are above 50, one quarter above 60, many not less than 70, and some more than 80 years old.”—*Report.*

* As the unpaid pauper nurses have some little additional allowance of tea or beer, it is not unusual for the medical attendant to send such poor, feeble, old women as require some little indulgence to be nurses in the sick wards.

tea or sugar left by pitying friends went in this manner. The friends and relations, themselves poor, who came to visit some bedridden parent, or maimed husband, or idiotic child, generally brought some trifle to bribe the nurses; and I have heard of a nurse in one of the great London workhouses, who made five shillings a week by thus fleecing the poor inmates and their friends in pennies and sixpences. Those who would not pay this tax were neglected, and implored in vain to be turned in their beds. The matron knows that these things exist, but she has no power to prevent them; she exercises no *moral* authority: she sees that the beds are clean, the floor daily scoured, the food duly distributed; what tyranny may be exercised in her absence by these old hags, her deputies, she has no means of knowing; for the wretched creatures under their care dare not complain, knowing how it would be visited upon them. I will not now torture you by a description of what I know to have been inflicted and endured in these abodes of pauperism,—the perpetual scolding, squabbling, swearing. Neither peace, nor forbearance, nor mutual respect is there, nor reverence, nor gratitude. What perhaps has shocked me most was to discover, in the corner of one of these wards, a poor creature who had seen better days: to be startled when I went up to speak to one whose features or countenance had attracted me, by being answered in the unmistakeable tone and language of the well-bred and the well-born: and this has happened to me, not once, but several times. I never can understand why some discrimination should not be shown, unless it be that not one of those employed is of a grade, mental or moral, to be entrusted with such a power of discrimination. It is thought that no distinction ought to be made, where the necessary condition of entrance—poverty—is common to all; that no more regard should be had in the workhouse to the causes and antecedents of poverty than in a prison to the causes and antecedents of crime. Then there is the rule, that this refuge for the poor man is to be made as distasteful to the poor man as possible. But cannot some means be used to exclude the undeserving? Why should this last home of the poor be not only distasteful but deteriorating?

In some workhouses many who can work will not, and there is no power to compel them. In others, the inmates

are confined to such labour as is degrading and disgraceful — the sort of labour which is a punishment in prisons, — which excites no faculty of attention, or hope, or sympathy, — which contemplates neither utility nor improvement, — such as picking oakum, &c.; and this has been laid down lest there should exist some kind of competition injurious to tradesmen. Now this is surely a cruel and short-sighted policy, equally unjust and injurious.*

Besides the sick and the miserable, there are also to be found the vicious, the reckless, the utterly depraved; and I could not discover that there is any system of gentle religious discipline which aimed at the reforming of the bad, or the separation of the bad from the good, except in one of our great metropolitan workhouses. The depraved women bring contamination with them; the unwed mothers, who come to lie-in, go out laughing, with a promise to come again; and they do come again and again for the same purpose. The loudest tongues, the most violent tempers, the *she-bullies* as they are called, always are the best off; the gentler spirit sinks down, lies still, perhaps for six, or eight, or twelve years — I have seen such, — and so waits for death.

I must speak strongly on this point, because it is chiefly, in respect to the female inmates, that workhouses have been the fruitful seminaries of vice; and it is here that the supervision of superior women is most required. None of the so-called guardians of the poor take into consideration a truth, undeniable and sacred, that you cannot train a

* It originated with the petty tradesmen themselves, and the motives are, therefore, easily understood. In Dixon's *Life of Howard* we find an account of the changes introduced by Joseph II. into the *Maison de Force* at Ghent. All work was discontinued which could interfere with the interests of the manufacturers. The rooms were to be less clean and comfortable; the sojourn was to be made as disagreeable as possible; idleness introduced disease and vice; and the result was found to be dreadfully demoralising to the inmates, and not serviceable to those whom it was intended to protect.

There is an excellent essay on Pauper Labour in the "Transactions of the Society for the Promotion of Social Science for 1858," by Mr. George Carr, master of the Liverpool workhouse. He insists upon it that all *gratuitous* relief to the able-bodied should be put an end to; that they should be made to work, and paid for their work. He describes the system on which this may be done in the case of the lazy and vicious of both sexes without wrong to any one, and, after a three years' trial, has proved the practicability of the system. The present general system of workhouse management he seems to consider as a complete failure.

girl without calling out the family feeling. It ruins the nature of the creature to be brought up absolutely independent of all affections, reared under an impersonal parent like chickens hatched by steam. The substitute for the father is the manager; for the mother, the matron. No one cares for her, and she cares for no one. What wonder if she grows up selfish, cunning, lazy, reckless? Question some of these girls;—Such a one "has been in the 'house ten or twelve or sixteen years," or "all her life," as it may be:—"Doesn't know who her father was;" "Doesn't remember her mother;" "Thinks she has a brother somewhere;" "Has heard of an aunt, but does not know where she lives;" "Has no friend or relation in the 'house';" "Doesn't know any one outside." Is not this pitiful? What impulse of healthy, human, womanly nature can be awakened in these girls except through some gentle womanly influences, which alone could replace the family relationships? And are these to be systematically shut out? "The girls are worse than the boys," exclaim the wrathful guardians and despairing chaplains—"twenty times more unmanageable." Of course they are; for in them the divine law of nature is more coarsely and cruelly violated.

The number of females committed from the workhouses to two London prisons was, in the year 1856, nearly 500. In 1857 the number had increased. The visiting justices, in their Report, express their opinion "that if more attention were paid in workhouses to classification and other arrangements of a reformatory character, there would be much less necessity for sending so many of the inmates to prison; and are strengthened in this belief from the fact of the very great difference in the numbers that are sent from some of the workhouses in comparison with others." People cry out shame that our prisons should be better, more desirable, places than our workhouses: are we then to make our prisons worse, or our workhouses better?

The young women sent out of the reformatory prisons at Fulham, and at Golden Bridge, near Dublin, are capable of taking respectable places as servants; and they are overlooked for two years after their removal by the ladies connected with the management of these prisons. The young women discharged from a workhouse (unconvicted of any crime) are often to an incredible degree corrupted, and

generally ignorant and helpless in all practical things.* No one cares for them. No supervision of clergymen or ladies is exercised or authorised, as is the case with the prisoners. There is the strongest prejudice against taking them for servants. They form the class from which the hordes of wretched creatures who infest our streets are mainly supplied. After remaining out of the workhouse a few weeks, or a few months, they return, not so ignorant, but more positively vicious than they left. In one workhouse that I know of, out of 300 girls discharged when of an age to earn their bread, two-thirds returned to be the wretched mothers of wretched infants, swelling the mass of destitute inmates, and adding to the parish expenses.† It is astonishing that the poor-law guardians do not see that to encourage some moral and preventive influences within the walls of the workhouse must, in the long run, diminish the burthens on the ratepayers.

When it was said that in a certain workhouse the outdoor relief bestowed had been distributed to creatures penned up for hours in foul air, who had waited for the bread doled out with curses, and received with sullen unthankfulness, as if they had been dogs; the answer was that many of these unhappy beings had become, from their perverted instincts, their fierce natures, their base insolence, and servile cunning, little better than brutes; and that "it was complimenting them too highly to compare them to dogs?" But what has made them so? It is the system of which I complain, which brings a vulgar and a brutal power to bear on vulgarity and brutality, the bad and defective organisation to bear on one bad and defective; so you increase and multiply, and excite as in a hot-bed all the material of evil, instead of neutralising it with good: and thus leavened you turn it out on society to contaminate

* For instance, we are told of some poor workhouse girls from fifteen to eighteen years old who were taken into the St. Joseph's Institute. "The use of knives and forks was unknown to them; the hall mat seldom failed to trip them up; they had not presence of mind enough to carry a can of water; and it required practice to enable them to get up and down stairs without falling."

† Of 326 girls sent out of one workhouse, 110 were known to have been subsequently led into infamy and vice. In another workhouse, of 809 girls sent out, 209 were returned upon the parish in a deplorable state. One unmarried woman in another workhouse came back seven times to be confined.

all around.* What has ground humanity out of them, but a system which ignores the force of the natural and domestic relations, and trusts to no influence but a mere machinery? A keeper of a prison once relating how his wife had at last reformed a notorious drunkard, who had been many times in prison, and was considered incorrigible, — "Ma'am," said he, "she talked to him as a mother talks to a son; he got to dread her sair face more than a policeman or a sheriff." This reminds me of the speech of the poor wounded soldier to one of the lady nurses at Kulali: "You are as good to me as a mother," said he, looking up in her face, "and better than a mother, for all that I know!" A great, tall, working man was pouring out some domestic story to a friend of mine, when, stopping short, he said, "I beg your pardon, ma'am, but I was just speaking out to you as if you were my sister!" Now it is just this motherly and sisterly influence which I want to see carried out into the social relations; and I am persuaded that something of the mother's authority and the sister's tenderness *does* sanctify every woman in the eyes of men where she is called upon and authorised to work out social good.†

All the ladies who went to the Crimea bear uniform testimony to the excellent feeling of the poor men towards them. "Their submission and respect were quite filial, almost childlike," said one of these ladies with emotion. These soldiers had probably no other idea of a *lady* than might be gained from a distant sight of their officers' wives, in riding habits, figuring at a review. The effect therefore which genuine ladyhood, dignified, quiet, refined, com-

* That I may not be accused of exaggeration, I refer to the excellent lecture of the Rev. J. S. Brewer, for many years a workhouse chaplain (see *Lectures to Ladies on Practical Subjects*, p. 271), and also to a tract published more recently (in 1857), entitled *Metropolitan Workhouses and their inmates*, which has done, I believe, infinite good, and contains some most interesting particulars, not only as to the characters and condition of our own poor, but the management of some of the institutions at Paris. I have mentioned in the prefatory letter the improvements which have taken place in some few isolated workhouses since this essay was first published; but these are so far from general, and the evils of the whole system so monstrous, that I have allowed the passage to stand as originally written.

† The Roman Catholics understand this well, and their application of the words *mother* and *sister* as titles has been laughed at; yet everyone feels their power and significance; and if there be a power in them, and it be perfectly innocent, why should they not be used?

passionate, produced on their minds when brought into daily intimate relation with them, was that mingled admiration and reverence, which the good of each sex ought to feel for the other, which the real lady will always inspire. These soldiers, we are told, could think and speak of nothing but "angels" just descended to earth, and would not have been much more astonished had these "angels" suddenly returned to Heaven through the roof or through the window. But the time will come when these things will excite as much love and reverence, and less astonishment. The same observations apply to the ministry of ladies in a workhouse.*

I should say, from what I have seen, that it is in the men's wards of the workhouses, and yet more especially those of the boys, that female supervision is required, and where lady visitors would do essential good. Will they venture there? or will they think it "very improper?"

I was lately in a workhouse ward containing twenty-two beds; twenty-one were filled with poor decrepit old women in the last stage of existence. The nurse was, as usual, a coarse old hag. In the twenty-second bed was a young person of better habits, who had been an invalid, but was not helpless; she was there because she had no home to go to. There was no shelf or drawer near her bed to place anything in; this was not allowed, lest spirits should be concealed: the book she was reading—anything she wished to keep for herself—was deposited in her bed or under it:

* "The workhouse poor do sometimes see the more respectable portion of the male sex; the house is periodically visited by the vestry; the rector occasionally goes round. There are boards and board meetings, and before these the inmates are allowed to prefer their complaints. But the best of the female sex they never see. They do not know what ladies are, except as they are spoken of as the mistresses of a house or the employers of servants. For the London workhouse poor—I speak of course within the limits of what I know—belong mainly to the class which has never come in contact with the upper classes of society."

He speaks in another place of the "insensible influence which the mere presence of ladies, their voice, their common words, their ordinary manners, their thoughts, all that they carry unconsciously about them, can exercise on the poor: but this applies to real ladies, cultivated, gentle, well-born, well-bred, not to vulgar, pretentious, meddling women calling themselves *ladies*. 'There is no people more alive to gentle blood and gentle manners than the English poor;' and it is not by undervaluing such distinctions, but making use of them, that you will prevail." (See the whole of this Lecture on Workhouse Visiting, the result of the experience of a Workhouse Chaplain.—*Lectures to Ladies*, pp. 278—281.)

nothing was done for comfort, and very little for decency. The power of retiring for a little space from all these eyes and tongues was quite out of the question: and so it was everywhere. A poor, decent old woman, sinking into death, in a ward where there were twenty-five other inmates, wished to be read to; but there was no one to do this: she thought she would try to bribe one of the others to read to her, by the offer of "a hap'orth of snuff;" but even this would not do.*

One informant writes to me:—"Our chaplain a few weeks ago preached drunk in the morning, and at evening service was too drunk to preach at all. The sullen look of the paupers who had been punished for drunkenness cannot be forgotten." The chaplain was not dismissed, only obliged to send in his resignation; and this took place in a workhouse where the governor is described as most excellent, and the matron most respectable; it is the *system* therefore which is at fault. A lady-visitor in a workhouse writes to me that the first time she entered the ward of the dissolute women the language, manners, oaths, were so dreadful as to terrify her, though not unused to deal with the miserable and perverted: she asked was it safe? and was answered, "Yea, for a lady." After the first week or two they began to be more quiet, and to return her salutation in a civilised fashion, "and now," she adds, "they are always glad to see me." This (written in 1859) reminds us of the state in which Mrs. Fry found the female convicts in Newgate, forty years ago: and the scene is not a prison, but a public "charity." Have we made no farther progress?

The organisation of the Workhouse-visiting Society since 1857 has provided against the mistakes and abuses which might arise from the introduction of lady-visitors, and hitherto the experiment has worked well; and, being now supported by the sanction of the National Association for the Promotion of Social Science, it has found favour with many who would have looked coldly on the proposal had it proceeded merely from the philanthropic impulses of a few benevolent ladies.

* "It is the insolence of its officials, and the insubordination of its inmates, that make the poorhouse (what we have heard respectable paupers call it) a hell upon earth. It is intolerable that an asylum established by law, instead of being made formidable to the bad by the order it enforces, should be made revolting to the good by the licence it permits."—*Quarterly Review*, Sept. 1858.

in unity, or in voluntary submission to a controlling power. If it be so, so much the worse! — but is it so?

The other institution I have alluded to, is yet more extraordinary, and of recent origin.

A few years ago a poor priest, who had served as chaplain in an hospital, being struck by the dreadful state of the convalescent women, who, after being dismissed as cured while yet too weak for labour, were obliged to have recourse to vice or to starve, fitted up a garret with four old half-rotten bedsteads, into which he received four wretched, sick, sinful creatures, and went round his parish begging for their support. Such was the beginning of the "*Casa della divina Provvidenza*," called also "*La Casa Cotelengo*," from the name of its founder, who died only a few years ago.

When I visited this extraordinary place, I found that the garret and its four old bedsteads had gradually extended to many ranges of buildings, for different purposes.* There is an hospital with 200 beds; another hospital especially for wretched, diseased women out of the streets, and another for children, containing fifty beds; a refuge for forsaken infants; a small school for deaf and dumb (children and others); a ward especially for epileptic patients and *crétins*. The attendance on this vast congregation of sick and suffering beings is voluntary, and considered by the physicians, nurses, and sisters as an act of religion. There were about 200 attendants, men and women. The number of inmates constantly varied, and no regular account was kept of them: one day it was calculated to be about 1300, patients and nurses all included. The deaths are about six daily. All who would be rejected from other hospitals, who have incurable, horrid, chronic diseases, who are in the last stage of helpless, hopeless misery, come here; none are ever turned away. *There are no funds, and no accounts are kept*; nor, I must confess, is there any of the order and neatness of a regular hospital. All the citizens of Turin, more especially the poorer class, contribute something; and so "one day telleth another." "We trust to divine Providence, and have hitherto wanted for nothing," was

* The original "four old bedsteads" are preserved *in memoriam*, and were pointed out to me.

to fulfil some of the purposes for which our workhouse were originally instituted.

One of these is a community of women called *Rosin* from the name of their founder, Rosa Governo, who has been a servant girl. It cannot be styled a religious community, in the usual sense, as neither vows nor seclusion are required: it is a working joint-stock company, with strong interfusion of the religious element, without which I believe it could not have held together. Here I found wonderful to tell, nearly 400 women of all ages, from fifteen and upwards, living together in a very extensive clean, airy building (or rather assemblage of buildings, as they had added one house to another), maintaining themselves by their united labour, and carrying on a variety of occupations, as tailoring, embroidery (especially the embroidery of military accoutrements for the army), weaving, spinning, shirt-making, lace-making — everything, in short, in which female ingenuity could be employed. They have a large, well-kept garden; a school for the poor children of the neighbourhood; an infirmary, including a ward for those whose age had exempted them from work; a capital dispensary, with a small medical library; here I found one of the women preparing some medicines, and another studying intently a French medical work.

This female community is much respected in Turin, and has flourished for more than a century. It is entirely self-supported, and the yearly revenue averages between 70,000 and 80,000 francs. The women are ruled by a superior, elected from among themselves, and in the workrooms were divided into classes, or groups, each under the direction of a monitor to keep order. The rules of admission and entrance and the interior regulations are strict. Any inmate may leave at once whenever she pleases, but (as I understood) cannot be re-admitted. The costume, which is that worn by the lower classes in 1744 when the community was founded, is not becoming, but not very peculiar. All looked clean and cheerful.

I have been assured by some of my friends, who ought to understand these matters, that such an institution would be "quite impossible" in England, because the education given to the girls of the working class renders it "quite impossible" for a number of them to dwell together

the reply to my inquiry. "Sometimes our coffer is empty, sometimes it is full. If we are poor to-day, we shall be richer to-morrow. God helps us!"

In England, a political economist or a poor-law commissioner would have been thrown into fits by such a spectacle of slovenly charity. Too true it is—

"The wise want love, and they who love want wisdom;
And all good things are thus confused to ill!"

EDUCATION AND TRAINING OF WOMEN FOR SOCIAL EMPLOYMENTS.

AND now, having shown what an extensive field there is for work, what are the qualifications required in the workers? It is plain that mere kindly impulses and self-confidence (so different from practical benevolence and tender, humble faith!) will not suffice. By what means are we to prepare and discipline our women for the work they may be called to perform? What has been done, what may be done, to render them fitting helpmates for energetic and benevolent men, and instruments of beneficent power? These are momentous questions, which we have now to consider.

The complaint has become threadbare; yet I must begin by noticing the mere *fact* as such. There is no adequate provision for the practical education of the middle and lower classes of girls in this country; and (which is much worse) the importance of this want is either overlooked, or at least no one in power thinks it worth while to treat this part of educational statics with any particular attention. Open the books and pamphlets on national education, read the speeches of our legislators, the clever leading articles in our journals; everywhere it is the same. The education of boys for professional and practical life, the sort of instruction which is to fit them for such and such civil or military employments, are always discussed as of the highest importance; and the provision already made is, we are assured, not nearly sufficient. What shall be said of the general tone of feeling and opinion with regard to the education of women? Is it less important than t

of men? I will not go into the extreme opinions of those who argue that it is even *more* important, inasmuch as women being the mothers of the human race a very large portion of their mental and moral organisation must pass into that of their offspring. The saying of a wise philosopher and lawyer, "All our able men have had able mothers," is, however, so generally true, that the few exceptions only prove the rule. Here I would merely suggest, that a sound practical education preparatory to the duties and business of real life is of as much importance to women as to men, and ought not to be treated as comparatively insignificant, as merely accidental or accessory to the education of the other sex.* The tone of indifference assumed on this point, and the comparatively small means afforded, is a mistake for which we shall pay dearly.† It unites with other causes in lowering the standard of opinion in respect to women, besides being more directly injurious. I am acquainted with several of those ladies who had to select the hired nurses sent out to the East, and they could make terrible revelations on this subject. Out of the hundreds of women who offered themselves, it was scarcely possible to find a tenth of the number fit to be sent out; and more than the half of that number disgraced themselves, or were found useless when there. The ignorance, the incompetency, the slowness of the unexercised reasoning powers; the want of judgment and of thought which made it impossible for them to direct, the violent

* In the year 1854, out of 159,727 marriages, 47,843 males and 68,175 females signed the marriage register by making their mark. In 1848 the proportion was the same: 43,166 males and 62,771 females were unable to write their names. So that the number of uneducated women is one-third greater than the number of uneducated men. There remains, then, the astounding fact, that out of nearly 80,000 women who approached the altar, 68,175 could not write their names.

† The North British Review for June 1856, which I had not seen when this Lecture was written, contains an article entitled "Outrages on Women," already referred to (p. 76). In this excellent essay, the custom—must we call it so?—of "wife-beating" is attributed not merely to ruffianism on the part of the man, but to the miserable, untidy, unhealthy dwellings of the poor, and the uncontrolled tempers, ignorance of what are called "common things," and want of all training in wifely and womanly duties and responsibilities, on the part of the women. If they have "aggravating tongues," and are unthrifty and untidy, having been taught no better, it is not a sufficient reason why they should be beaten, kicked, stamped upon, but it is a cause which should be taken into consideration by our legislators and educators.

insubordinate tempers which made it impossible for them to obey, rendered them the plague of the authorities. Their degraded habits made them unfit to be trusted in the men's hospitals. They were drunken as well as dissolute, and the lady nurses felt themselves disgraced as Englishwomen and Christians in the eyes of the stranger and unbeliever. This was the case with two-thirds of the hired nurses, and with almost all the soldiers' wives, very few of whom I believe were found available for any useful purpose. These women had all been in schools of one sort or another—national schools, Sunday schools—and this was the result.

Now I will tell you, as an illustration, what I have seen only very lately. I was in a very large parish union, where there were about four hundred children, nearly an equal number of boys and girls; and schools for both. The boys had an excellent master for reading and writing, and had masters besides, to teach them various trades. There was a tailor, a carpenter, a shoemaker, a hairdresser, a plumber, who, at wages from 25s. to 35s. a week, were employed to instruct the boys in their respective trades. The girls were taught reading, writing, and sewing; some of them, under the pauper menials, helped to scour and scrub. The overtaxed, anxious mistress seemed to do her best; but there was not sufficient assistance. The whole system was defective and depressing, and could not by any possibility turn out efficient domestic servants, or well-disciplined, religious-minded, cheerful-tempered girls. I was informed that, of the boys sent out of this workhouse, about 2 per cent. returned to the parish in want or unserviceable; while of the girls they reckoned that about 50 per cent. were returned to them ruined and depraved.*

* On my repeating this official testimony to some friends of mine, it was received with incredulous horror. I have since found it fearfully corroborated by two other witnesses. A matron, who had 800 female children under her care, knew of the after life of about 200: about 12 had turned out well.

* Various metropolitan workhouses (St. George's, Hanover Square, excepted), caused their refractory paupers to be committed to Cold Bath Fields, up to September, 1850, and we witnessed in the demeanour of young girls from twenty years of age and upwards, such revolting specimens of workhouse education, that the exhibition was at once frightful and disgusting. The inconceivable wickedness of those girls was absolutely appalling."—Colonel Chesterton.

To this testimony from the governor of a prison I add that of Mr.

Remember, I do not give you this as a picture of the general state of things in workhouse schools, but merely as an illustration of the prevalent opinion as to the sort of instruction which is fitting and necessary for pauper boys, compared with that which is thought sufficient for pauper girls, and the results in both cases.

The education given to many of our girls of the higher, even the highest classes, is far better calculated to turn out efficient working women, than in those classes who are supposed to be born to labour. I think that in a general way they are too well instructed in all they have to avoid, and too little instructed in all they have to do: still, where the tone of the mind is raised by an acquaintance with art and literature, where the intellect has been exercised from childhood, where temper has been restrained, at least from habitual good manners, if not from higher motives; we have something better to begin with than the low principles, vacant minds, animal propensities, and utterly undisciplined tempers of the girls who are intended for "service." But I am glad to see that these evils are awakening every day more and more attention.

It is a serious objection to present modes of education in both sexes, that nothing is done with the important aim of enabling them to understand each other, and work together harmoniously and trustfully in after life. There seems, however, to exist among us an awakening and extending conviction that something of this is necessary, and that the complete separation of boys and girls in their early education, while yet children, is a great mistake, and a source of infinite unhappiness and immorality.* They

Brewer, chaplain of one of our great workhouses. He says that the disorderly girls and boys in our streets "are mainly the produce of the workhouse and the workhouse schools. Over them society has no hold, because they have been taught to feel that they have nothing in common with their fellow men. *Their experience is not of a home or of parents, but of a workhouse and a governor — of a prison and a gaoler as hard and rigid as either.*" (*Lectures to Ladies on Practical Subjects*, p. 279.) Is this then one of the results of our parish charities?

* On this point I have spoken out elsewhere, and I repeat it here. While children — till eleven or twelve years old at least — boys and girls ought to be accustomed to learn together, play together, eat together, to be mutually forbearing, helpful, and kind to each other. More of the happiness and morality of their after-life depends on their childish habits than people would well believe. It was never contemplated, by the natural law of domestic life, that the two halves of humanity were

are not accustomed to each other, and when they are afterwards associated together in the labours of life, they have not been prepared for such communion by early childish habits of mutual dependence and mutual good will, such as the law of nature contemplated in domestic life, to which all education should as far as possible be assimilated. Thus, each sex being herded together in separate schools, the faults of each are increased; and in the established system of teaching nothing is done to supply by principle the incongruities of feeling and habits, and ignorance of each other, produced and fostered by this dreadful mistake; so when called upon to act in communion, unless bound together by some external conventional law, there is mutual restraint, mutual mistrust, if not a positive shrinking asunder; and this is a great evil in itself, and the cause of unnumbered evils in its social effects.

But suppose the necessity of a better and more sympathetic education for *all* conceded, and suppose it even already provided for by more enlightened public opinion, there remain some special and plausible objections against the training of women for active, and social, and responsible avocations, such as I have pointed out. Of these objections, which I have often had to listen to, *three* only appear to me worth a moment's attention.

And first, you hear people say, quite sententially, "I object to anything which takes a woman out of her home, and removes her from the sphere of domestic duty." So do I! I object strongly to anything which takes a woman out of her proper sphere, out of a happy and

treated to be a mischief to each other. Such was not God's design: "male and female created he them" for wise and beneficent purposes. (Common-place Book, 2nd edit. p. 217.) See also on this point the testimony of an experienced schoolmaster, who has devoted a whole chapter to the subject. ("*Stow on the Training System*," I think the 6th edition of that admirable and practical book.) A friend writes to me, "We heard the idea highly commended the other day by the master of the large idiot school at Reigate. He says the mixture of little boys and girls there has been of great service; and he mentioned one small instance of the good manners of the boys resulting from it, which from these poor creatures I thought was striking: When walking out two and two, of their own accord they formed into single file, politely making room for the girls to pass."

congenial home, where her presence is delightful and her services necessary: *there* is her first duty. I object also to everything which takes away a man from *his* first duty, the protection and support of his home. Let us bear in mind that for every man who does not provide a home, there must exist a woman who must make or find a home for herself, somehow or somewhere. There seems to be no objection to taking the lower classes of women out of their homes to be domestic servants, milliners, shop-women, factory-girls, and the better educated to be governesses; or if there be objections, they are overborne by the pressure of an obvious necessity. Then why should the objection be urged, merely with respect to other employments, only because they are as yet rather unusual, or at least not yet recognised among us, but which are of a far more elevated kind?

Then there is much sentimental speech of women being educated to "adorn a home," to be "a good wife," "a good mother." But how many women are there who have no home, who are neither wives nor mothers, nor ever will be while they live? Will you deny to them the power to carry into a wider sphere the duties of home — the wifely, motherly, sisterly instincts, which bind them to the other half of the human race? Must these be utterly crushed; or may they not be expanded and gratified healthily, innocently, usefully? This, surely, is at least worth considering, before we allow the force of an objection which seems to consist in phrases rather than in arguments.

A second objection, which I have heard chiefly from medical men, is, that the women of the educated classes, from which our volunteers are to be taken, are in general feeble, over-refined, and excitable, apt to take fancies to individuals where their aid and attention ought to be impartial and general, too self-confident for obedience, too sensitive to be trusted. That these objections apply to many women I have no doubt: that they apply to women generally, I deny. Medical men have much more experience of the invalided and feeble portion of the sex, than of the healthful portion. They know the fatal influence which some of our conventional customs, and an ill-understood physical education, have on the general

health and development of girls. The sick fancies of idle, disappointed, desponding women give abundant occupation to clever physicians, who are satisfied to deal with the immediate physical causes of disease, without troubling themselves with the antecedent and remote moral causes; so it is very natural that they should have great pity for us, but not much respect. Few of them are sufficiently large-minded to perceive that the service of a better order of women in our public institutions, by giving employment to the unoccupied faculties and feelings, would be a means of improved health and cheerfulness not only in themselves but in others, and that if women were trained and prepared by a sufficient study and probation, they would be made efficient and practical.

I have heard medical men, who were in the Crimea, express their conviction that a trial of English lady volunteer nurses *must* end in total failure, and who at the same time were loud and emphatic in their admiration of the Roman Catholic Sisters of Charity. The objection then, apparently, is not against women in general, but against English women in particular, brought up in the Protestant faith. Now, do they mean to say that there is anything in the Roman Catholic religion which produces these efficient women? or that it is impossible to train any other women to perform the same duties with the same calm and quiet efficiency, the same zeal and devotion? Really I do not see that feminine energy and efficiency belong to any one section of the great Christian community.

And now for the third objection; it is thus put:—

“Would you make charity a profession?”

Why not? why should not charity be a profession in our sex, just so far (*and no farther*) as religion is a profession in yours? If a man attires himself in a black surplice, ascends a pulpit, and publicly preaches religion, are we, therefore, to suppose that his religious profession is merely a profession, instead of a holy, heartfelt vocation? If a woman puts on a grey gown, and openly takes upon herself the blessed duty of caring for the sick, the poor, the perverted, are we therefore to suppose that charity is with her merely a profession? Here we have surely a distinction without a difference! No doubt we should all be religious, whether we assume the outward garb or not; no

doubt we should all be charitable, whether in white, black, or grey; but why should not charity assume functions publicly recognised—openly, yet quietly and modestly exercised? Why is female influence always supposed to be secret, underhand, exercised in some way which is not to appear?—till even our good deeds borrow the piquancy of intrigue, and we are told practically to seek the shade, till morally we fear the light? Why can we not walk bravely, honestly, and serenely, yet simply and humbly, along the path we have chosen, or to which it hath pleased God to call us, instead of creeping about in a spirit of fear as if quite overcome by the sense of our own wonderful merits, and obliged to throw over them a veil of conventional humility?

Our pretension to such avocations as I have mentioned may possibly be met by just the same arguments which fifty years ago were launched against "literary ladies;" and if sneers at "blue stockings" and female pedants could have turned women from the cultivation of their minds, and crushed every manifestation of genius, no doubt it would have been done. Luckily, two admirable and gifted men,—Professor Playfair, with his profound science, and tender, generous feeling, and Sydney Smith, with all the force of his strong masculine sense, and all the splendour of his wit,—came to our rescue at a most critical period. The former claimed for us the department of science; the latter, that of literature and independent thought. This is twenty or thirty years ago. There are men now, equally manly and farsighted, eager to instruct us and sustain us in well doing, eager to recognise in us fellow-labourers by divine appointment, companions by the grace of God, without whom no step in social progress can be attained, no lasting good achieved.

The commencement of a college for working women, the difficulties it has had to contend with, and its progress up to this time, are signal illustrations of the existence of the "great want" of which I have spoken, and the hopes and purposes which are filling thoughtful, active, beneficent minds. Shall I tell you what in this noble design has struck me with the deepest emotion, the deepest thankfulness? It is the interest with which men of the working class and professional men have received it. The former,

when consulted, "spoke," Mr. Maurice says, "with remarkable freedom and intelligence: we gathered a great many more hints and opinions than we had all expected." There were differences of opinion in respect to arrangements and details, but "entire unanimity on the main question. There was no indication whatever of the slightest fear that females should know as much as they themselves knew, or more than they knew. There was a manifest wish that they should have the same advantages. There was a distinct and positive call upon us, not to withhold from the one what we were trying to give to the other."

So far the intelligent working men. Even more fraught with encouragement and hope was the series of Lectures on practical subjects, addressed to a female audience, to educated women who wished to know what it was best for them to learn before they were fitted to help and to teach. I was not present, being abroad at the time; but, as I was informed, the audience collected was not so large as might have been expected. That was not surprising; but what was surprising (and delightful too), there were found ready and willing to deliver these lectures to ladies "on practical subjects," eleven distinguished professional men; of these, six were clergymen, three physicians, and two lawyers. The six lectures delivered by clergymen dwelt of course chiefly on the duty of well-directed benevolence, in the hospital and in the workhouse, in parish supervision, and district visiting: all excellent in spirit and feeling. One, on the "Teaching by Words"—capital,—as awakening the intellect to the uses and possible abuses of language, as a key to thought as well as an implement of thought. Perhaps, if women were taught the true value and significance of words, they would be the less likely to pour them forth on light occasions.

The three lectures by the medical men are all so excellent, that I felt lifted up in heart as I closed the volume. The two lectures on law ("Law as it affects the Poor," and "Sanitary Law") are useful and clear, though technical.

It is not anywhere indicated in these lectures, that weakness and ignorance are to be accounted as charms in women, by which they are to recommend themselves to intelligent men; or that it is "unfeminine" to study the conditions of health; or that the desire to know something of those

divine laws, "through which she lives, and moves, and has her being," is the result of a "depraved imagination;" or that the wish to prepare herself by experience to minister to disease and affliction is to be sneered at as a "taste for surgery." (I beg of you to observe that I am here citing phrases which I have myself heard.) Another spirit animates the writers of these lectures.* Everywhere the important social work which rests on the woman is generally acknowledged and wisely inculcated. She is encouraged to think, and to carry out thought into action.

WORKING FOR HIRE AND WORKING FOR LOVE.

The training of a better order of women for hospital nurses is that department of social usefulness which is more immediately before the public, and it involves other considerations besides those I have touched upon.

There is no question I have heard more warmly contested, than the question of paid or unpaid female officials. I think there should be both. We should have them of two classes; those who receive direct pay, and those who do not. Consider the qualifications required. There must be force of character of no common kind; the humility which can obey, and the intelligence which can rule; great enthusiasm, great self-command, great benevolence; quickness of perception with quietness of temper; the power of dealing with the minds of others, and a surrender of the whole being to the love and service of God: without the religious spirit we can do nothing. Now, can we hope to obtain these qualifications for any pay which our jails, workhouses, or hospitals could afford?—or indeed for any pay whatever? Yet it is precisely an order of women, quite beyond the reach of any remuneration that could be afforded, which is so imperatively required in our institutions.

The idea of service without pay seems quite shocking to some minds, quite unintelligible; they quote sententiously,

* See particularly the lecture on "The College and the Hospital," and the lecture on "Dispensaries and allied Institutions," in which the importance, religious and practical, attached to the study of physiology, is the same principle for which the late Dr. Andrew Combe, and his brother Mr. George Combe, contended during the whole of their useful lives.

"The labourer is worthy of his hire." True; but what shall be that hire? Must it necessarily be in coin of the realm? There are many women of small independent means, who would gladly serve their fellow-creatures, requiring nothing but the freedom and the means so to devote themselves. There are women who would prefer "laying up for themselves treasures in heaven," to coining their souls into pounds, shillings, and pence on earth; who, having nothing, ask nothing but a subsistence secured to them; and for this are willing to give the best that is in them, and work out their lives while strength is given them. I believe that such service is especially blessed. I believe that such service does not weary, is more gracious and long-suffering than any other, blessing those who give and those who receive. I believe it has a potency for good that no hired service can have.

The idea in this country that everything has a money value, to be calculated to a farthing, according to the state of the market, is so ingrained into us, that the softest sympathies and highest duties, and dearest privileges of Christians, are never supposed to be attainable unless sold and paid for by the week, or month, or year. This is so much the case, that those who visit the poor people can hardly banish from their minds the conviction that there is some interested motive, some concealed, selfish object in doing so. Yet if once brought to believe that there is really only the wish for their good, how beautiful and how blessed becomes the intercourse! The two meanest forms of sensuality and selfishness in our lower classes, the love of money and the love of drink, are best combated by the combined religious and feminine influence. A strong barrier to this vulgar greediness would be produced, I think, by the presence and employment of women officially authorised, yet not hired, and doing their duty from pure love of God and man.* It would give a more elevated standard

* "The profound consolation which one derives from the remembrance of Miss Nightingale's services in the war is that they entirely confound the notion that only paid jobs are done effectually; that work undertaken from love must be performed in a slovenly, unbusiness-like way. That has been the conviction of our English public: it has been put again and again into solemn maxims; and all acts not assuming them for their foundation have been laughed to scorn. Miss Nightingale has turned the laugh in the other direction. There has been slovenliness

to many minds, to be brought into relation with such women.

I find the admixture of voluntary and unpaid labour with hired labour, thus advocated in an excellent article in the "Quarterly Review" for Sept. 1855. "Many there doubtless are, who, without neglecting duty, may engage in this office of charity, and thus shun the dangers of the world they dread, or find a refuge from the hardness of a world which has lost its power to please though not to wound them; and thus far at least is clear, that whether they sacrifice its pleasures, or seek a shelter from its vexations, their presence at the sick-bed will diffuse the zeal of love and the charm of refinement over an office which has hitherto, at the best, been executed with the cold regularity of routine."

But to render the hired labour efficient and reliable, it must be placed at the disposal of the voluntary and unpaid labour, and be in all respects subordinate; as is the case in King's College Hospital. The want of this regulation produced some mischief in the Crimea, which I shall have to revert to further on.

Then, as to whether the women who devote themselves to these services should or should not be associated into a community, is a question hotly debated, to be settled I think by the individual vocation.

One says, "I cannot work with other people; I must go on in my own way." Well, let her go on in her own way, let her go on working single-handed as is good in her own eyes; and God forbid that I should undervalue the good done simply and religiously by some excellent women I know working in their own way! But another says, "I feel the need of a bond of sympathy; it strengthens and sustains me. I should like to have my work cut out and appointed for me, and to labour in association both with men and women." And this is well also. There is room, there is work, for both. I think a community might be formed on a broader principle than that which is contemplated, I believe, by the council of the Nightingale fund, for the mere preparation of hospital nurses; but am too

enough in many departments. The tasks that have been done most thoroughly have been done from a divine inspiration."—*Lectures to Ladies on Practical Subjects*, p. 17.

well aware of the difficulties from within and without not to hail a beginning, though it fall far short of that which is required: only we must keep our eyes fixed on the larger views.

Where the objects are of great importance, and have to do with our own deepest, innermost life, it requires an especial training of the mind and habits to preserve, in the subjection of the individual will, all the freshness and energy of the mental powers. To resign the highest privileges of individual action, and yet preserve the highest privileges of the individual conscience, this may be difficult, but it has been proved not to be impossible. But, I repeat, the individual inclinations and gifts must settle this.

RELIGIOUS DIFFICULTIES.

I am sure that my Roman Catholic friends are sincere in their belief that such a community can take root and succeed only in their Church. At all events, it is the interest of the Roman Catholic priesthood to persuade us that the power of working a public charitable institution by a due admixture of the religious and feminine element with the masculine directing will, belongs to them only. This is very natural on their part, and wise, and quite intelligible; but is it wise of our most influential clergymen to play into their hands, to act and preach as if this plea were true? As if this privilege of the woman to pervade our human institutions with a more tender and more moral power, to work openly with a species of religious sanction, like the Deaconesses of the primitive Christian Church, were really and inseparably interwoven with the doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church, so that we cannot have Sisters of Charity without accepting also an infallible pope, transubstantiation, the immaculate conception, and Heaven knows what besides, the terror and abomination of our evangelicals? Surely it is an injury to the cause of religious freedom and human progress, an insult to their own peculiar form of faith, for any sect to acknowledge that what they allow to be good and desirable, and even necessary in itself, is inextricable from what they believe to be false and ensnaring.

These views are every day driving distinguished, and gifted, and enthusiastic women, into the pale of that Church, which stretches out its arms, and says, "Come unto me, ye who are troubled, ye who are idle, and I will give you rest and work, and, with these, sympathy, and reverence, the religious sanction, direction, and control!" Can we find nothing of all this for our women? Why should they thus go out from among us? I, for my part, do not understand it.

In England it is not the form of Christianity we profess which is against such an organisation of feminine aid in good works as I would advocate;—God forbid! Yet some of our greatest difficulties may be ascribed to the deep-rooted puritanical prejudices bequeathed to us by our ancestors. It is worth considering that the first effect of the Calvinistic reaction against the dominant Church, and against the errors, and exaggerations, and gross materialism which had been connected with the worship of the Virgin Mother, was not favourable to women. In the earlier times of the Christian Church, whenever certain women distinguished themselves by particular sanctity or charity, or exercised any especial moral or intellectual influence, the Church absorbed them, claimed them, held them up to reverence during life and canonised them after death; and still their beautiful images shine upon us from our cathedral windows, or stand out in sculptured forms in all the dignity of their hallowed office and venerable religious attributes. But after these fair superstitions had been abrogated by the severity of the early reformers, and were succeeded by the strongest prejudice against women exercising any kind of open and authorised religious or spiritual influence, still there were women who did exercise such influence—the natural power of strong intellect, or strong enthusiasm. The superiority could not be denied; but as it could no longer be referred to a larger measure of heavenly gifts, it must be derived from demoniac power. Men had repudiated angels and saints, but they still devoutly believed in devils and witches. The benign miracles of female charity were the inventions and impositions of a lying priesthood; but woe unto him who doubted in the power of an old woman to ride on a broomstick, or of a young woman to entertain Satan as her emissary in mis-

chief! All the women who perished by judicial condemnation for heresy in the days of the inquisition did not equal the number of women condemned judicially as witches—hanged, tortured, burned, drowned like mad dogs—in the first century of the Reformed Church; and these horrors were enacted in the most civilised countries in Europe, by grave magistrates and ecclesiastics, who were proud of having thrown off the Roman yoke, and of reading their Bibles, where apparently they found as many texts in favour of burning witches as ever did the Inquisitors in favour of burning heretics. It was characteristic of the two diverging superstitions, that in the former age Dante conceived his Beatrice as the type of loving, wise, and spiritual womanhood, leading her lover into Paradise; while Milton's type of female attraction was Eve, the temptress to sin and death. The time is come, let us hope, when men have found out what we may truly be to them, not worshipping us as saints, or apostrophising us as angels, or persecuting us as witches, or crushing us as slaves; revering us for that power we are allowed to possess, not jealous of it, nor throwing it into some indirect or unhealthy form; profiting by our tenderness, not oppressing us because of it; taking us to themselves as helpers in all social good, not leaving our undirected energies to wear away our own lives, and sometime trouble theirs.

It is better than a dozen sermons on toleration, to count up the women who, during this half-century, have left the strongest and most durable impress on society—on the minds and the hearts of their generation. First, there is Mrs. Fry, the Quakeress, to whom we owe the cleansing of our prisons, and in part the reform of our criminal code; Caroline Chisholm, the Roman Catholic, with her strong common sense, her decision and independence of character, who may be said to have reformed the system of emigration; Mary Carpenter, the Dissenter, who has become an authority in all that concerns the treatment of juvenile delinquents; and Florence Nightingale, who in our time has opened a new path for female charity and female energy, is understood to belong to the Anglican church. And let us remember that there is not one of these four admirable women who has not been assailed in turn by the bitterest animosity, by the most vulgar, so-called religious abuse

from those who differed from them in their religious tenets, or from those who contemned them and would have put them down merely as women; not one of them who has not outlived prejudice and jealousy; not one of them who could have carried out their large and beneficent views without the aid of generous and enlightened men,—men who had the nobleness of mind to accept them as fellow-workers in the cause of humanity, to admit them on equal terms into the communion of labour and the communion of charity.

When I was abroad last year, I was led to make inquiries into that system of training which had been found so successful in turning out efficient, healthful, cheerful, kindly women. I found that it varied in the different communities, according to the different rules and objects of each; but in general these are the principal things attended to.

In the first place, none are accepted, even as probationers, who are of a sickly or weak organisation.

Every one who is accepted brings a small sum of money in her hand, at least 500 francs, that is, from about thirty to forty pounds. It is argued, that if a woman be at all respectable, and not driven to take up a religious and charitable vocation from mere want, she must have friends, or find friends, to subscribe for her this small dowry. In the Order of Charity of Vincent de Paul, none are accepted who have filled any servile office whatever, even that of a *femme-de-chambre*. On my exclaiming against this rule, as frequently shutting out women already to a certain degree efficient and experienced, my informant answered, "Yes, but it has been found by experience that those who have been accustomed to sell their services for a certain hire, become so imbued by this habit, or notion, or feeling, that it is impossible to trust them, or to place confidence in the higher principle which may appear to have actuated them." "No doubt," she added, "there may be exceptions, honourable exceptions; but we are obliged to adhere to a general rule, the wisdom of which has been justified by two centuries of experience." After a probation of six months, none are retained in the society whose vocation appears weak or uncertain, or who shrink from the duties

imposed upon them as painful or difficult. Everywhere I observed that exceeding care is taken to adapt the especial work to the individual nature: a woman, for instance, who excels in care and sympathy for children, does not always make a "good sick-nurse; and some women who do not nurse their own sex well, are found admirably efficient and patient in the men's wards, and in the military hospitals. Some have a talent for managing the insane, and are instructed accordingly. Some who have a particularly tender, enthusiastic, and cheerful temperament, are found excellent attendants for the very aged and incurably infirm. Thus they do not clash among themselves, nor does each fancy herself fitted for something different from what she is set to do. This discernment in the selection of fit instruments, this careful adaptation of the work to the natural tendencies, this apportioning of the labour to the mental and physical strength, is, I am sure, one cause of that cheerfulness and harmony of spirit, that serene and healthy look, which we observe in these Sisters of Charity, and which reacts in so remarkable a manner on the minds and the nerves of those to whom they minister. I should add, that those who manage the dispensaries receive a regular medical training, under an experienced apothecary.

In the Crimea, when many of our volunteer ladies were ill or "knocked up," and obliged to return home; when the hired nurses were either ill or useless through their ignorance, disobedience, or immorality, and dismissed in disgrace, the well-trained Sisters of Charity or of Mercy held on with unflagging spirit and energy, never surprised, never put out, ready in resource, meeting all difficulties with a cheerful spirit; a superiority which they owed to their previous training and experience, not certainly to any want of zeal, benevolence, or intelligence in their Protestant sisters of the better class.

I suppose it is well known that they are never paid wages, but a certain sum is paid by the hospital, or prison, or the family who employ them, to the house or community they belong to. The lowest sum is about 12*l.* a year, and they are besides provided with food and clothing. Those Sisters who have a high reputation for skill and experience are rated at a higher sum; and though they do not personally derive any profit from it, they have, I am told,

a just pride in the higher value placed on their services.*

How far these rules and regulations may be found applicable among ourselves, must be a matter of consideration and experiment. I am inclined to think that many of them might be adopted, if once those unreal spectral difficulties which strike terror into superstitious minds could be surmounted.

For instance, in matters of dress we are in this country too apt to consider the adoption of any particular costume as popish and fantastical; that is to say, we admit the despotism of fashion, we rebel against the suggestion of reason. We profess a boundless submission to the French milliners, wear modes of dress against which good taste, convenience, even our purses and our sense of propriety revolt; meantime if a dress be contrived to meet the requirements and proprieties of a certain vocation, unobtrusive, close-fitting, commodious, seemly, we rebel against it, we repudiate any interference with our individual liberty, individual caprice, and individual bad taste. We forget that dress has its *morale*, that if it be capable of affecting the imagination through the senses in a drawing-room, it will have the same power in a sick-room, and that it ought not to be left in the power of ignorance, or vulgarity, or thoughtlessness, to do through trifling means a real mischief.

Lately, in walking through the sick wards of a work-

* I have been told of a French Sister of Charity who, for many years, attended a certain division of the French army in every campaign. On the field of battle, her energy, her presence of mind, had saved many lives, and she obtained such an influence over the men as rendered her an object of deep respect to them and to their officers. According to the rule of her order, she had made no distinction on the field of battle between friends and enemies, or rather none were enemies; and she had received from the military authorities of Austria, Prussia, and Russia crosses of merit, in acknowledgment of the lives she had saved. After the war was over, she retired from age and infirmity to the shelter of her convent; but she was allowed to wear these decorations over her religious habit, as it appeared to give her pleasure, perhaps as much pleasure as the Victoria cross might give a valiant soldier. From her own people she could, of course, receive no reward whatever, it would have been against all rule; but they found a recompense for her, which seems to me very appropriate, very touching. The minister of war conferred on her the privilege of pardoning in every year two soldiers condemned to death; and so long as she lived she exercised this privilege. She died, I believe, only a few years ago.

house, I spoke to two hired nurses, who had been sent from our great hospitals to superintend and train the pauper nurses (a recent innovation, by the way, and one of excellent promise). One of these women wore a washed-out chintz gown of gay colours, a dirty pink ribbon with a gilt gaudy brooch about her neck; and on her head a very dirty cap, with dangling white beads. The other woman was in similar attire, except that her very dirty cap was decorated with faded dirty artificial flowers. In both cases the attire had all the appearance of having come out of a second-hand frippery shop; in both cases the desire was the same, to be distinguished from the pauper nurses, who wore the always odious workhouse dress: therefore, these respectable women flaunted in the habiliments of a street-walker. If a physician came to prescribe for our sick or dying friend in the dress of a fast Oxonian dandy, or a sporting flash man, should we approve of it? Yet here is the same direct violation of decency and good feeling. It is quite as great a mistake, though one of a different kind, when a lady, by position and education, visits in a workhouse or a district, dressed like a poor woman of the lowest class. It is done, I know, in some cases, from a feeling of humility; but the poor, who are very sensitive to dress, manners, language, and appearance, like this assumption of humility as little as they like pride and insolence: neither is a gay, fashionable dress more suitable, and the religious "habit" is, in Protestant eyes, displeasing. There is a "fitness in things" which suggests itself to good sense and good taste, and which those who do not intuitively appreciate, should be taught.

The genuine horror of a community of women associated for religious and charitable purposes entertained by some most excellent people, who are accustomed to see things only on one side and *from* one side, is hardly conceivable by those who have looked into the working of such communities; for instance, I find in a very charming little book the following passage of elegant objurgation:—

"Look out," says the writer, "a clever, enthusiastic woman, with a strong will of her own, and no stronger will to control it; make her the Lady Superior of a sisterhood, without any man to come, with a weight of years, authority, and holiness, to say to her, *this must not be—that would*

be very silly, or unreasonable, or improper, and I positively forbid it*:—do this and you will do the devil's work in frustrating a means of good as effectually as himself could do. You will get sisterhoods in all the slavish misery of nuns, and with none of the protection of convents,—a pack of unhappy women, forbidden to exercise common sense, and rendered morbid, sensitive, and undevout by the system which the uncontrolled power of the Lady Superior exercises over them; and not rarely you will have the Lady Superior go crazy, because of the unlimited indulgence of her talent for government."†

Of course, if you *do this*, if you build with bad materials, your edifice will be crazy. But why take it for granted that your material is to be bad, or that the devil is of necessity to interfere? Now, over against this gratuitous picture of a sisterhood, let us place another of a brotherhood by way of *pendant*. Take a house intended by Christians to be an asylum for the poor; fill it with some hundreds of the ruined, the reckless, the depraved; the aged, the helpless, the homeless: with wailing infants, with unwed mothers, and all the infinite grades of sin and suffering. Bring this mass of human agonies together; cram them close in horrid propinquity, in filth, and fetid air—the evil to deprave the good, the better-educated where curses and the foulest language pollute their ears; place this institution—this Christian, charitable institution—under the government of a set of men, armed with a grim authority, called, as if in mockery, "guardians of the poor;" let there be no woman near them, to whisper "*this is wrong*," or "*that is cruel and unreasonable*, and in the name of a God of mercy I forbid it;" let there be no cheerful, genial influence there, no gentle voice nor light tread, but drunken viragos to nurse the sick, and insolent officials to feed the hungry: do this, and you will have something as near as possible to what we can conceive of an earthly Hell—you will have an ill-managed Parish Work-house.

* One of the strongest objections made to the Roman Catholic Sisters of Charity is that they are under the control and dictation of the priests; yet here we are led to infer that it is a reproach to a Protestant sisterhood that they are emancipated from such control.

† *The Outlet*.

But why picture as necessary and inevitable, extremes which we may hope are only accidental? Why imagine a "pack of women" on one hand, and a "pack of men" on the other? Suppose we were to try what might be the effect of neutralising the mobility, sensibility, and excitability of the women by the firmness and judgment of the men? Would not that be better?

I must now conclude with a few last words.

We cannot look around us without seeing that a demand has not only been created, but becomes every day increasingly urgent, for a supply of working women at once more efficient and more effective. I use the words advisedly as distinct in meaning: women and men too are *efficient* through energy and experience, and *effective* through higher gifts and sympathies — higher aims and motives: *materially* efficient, *morally* effective. Meantime, with no want of zeal or aptitude, there is such a lamentable deficiency in training, in knowledge, in the means or opportunity of acquiring either, that I should despair — if I were not too old to despair — if I had not so often counted up the price we have to pay for truth, and the penance we must pay for falsehood too. If, among the hapless women I see struggling to bring their external existence into harmony with their inner life, — or, what is harder still, to bring their inner life into subjection to harsh and deteriorating circumstance — one half should go distracted, and the other half turn Roman Catholics, I might "even die with pity;" but certainly not yield up one inch of the ground I have taken, nor one iota of the faith that is in me.

I remember that, when speaking on these subjects to a very benevolent and accomplished man, a clergyman, he said thoughtfully, "I have little doubt that you are right: and yet if there be such a divine law involving all human well-being and progress in its recognition, — how is it that it has not been more distinctly revealed to us? how is it that it comes to us now like a novelty to be subjected to the examination of the sceptical and the carping of the foolish?"

We know that there has existed from the commencement of the creation a law of God, binding the whole universe into one harmonious whole, guiding the planets in their orbits, connecting our own world with far-off worlds of light and life, and at the same time so regulating our least movements on this earth, that we cannot put one foot before the other, but in subjection to it. Yet of the existence of this law we knew nothing, till, one hundred and fifty years ago, the fall of an apple revealed it to Newton: and to what revelations most important to our well-being has it not since led! And may there not be a law of moral and physical life as universal, as essential; as eternal, which in its agency has always been felt, and yet, in its relation to happiness and progress, is only just beginning to be understood, and not yet fully applied? I do not say it *is* so; but may it not possibly be so?

In general there is among men—superior men—a strong, generous sympathy with the cause I advocate. How noble and good I have found them! how raised in their manly power above all vulgar masculine jealousies! Yet some among them, some *practical* men so called, who start at shadows—some members of parliament who weigh truth and expediency against each other in their political balance—some clergymen, bending down from the height of their white neckcloths, half-sympathising, half-patronising,—these say to me, “We really cannot deal with abstract principles, we must work with such material as we have at hand. What is your plan? If we knew what plan you have formed we might help you. What do you propose to do?”

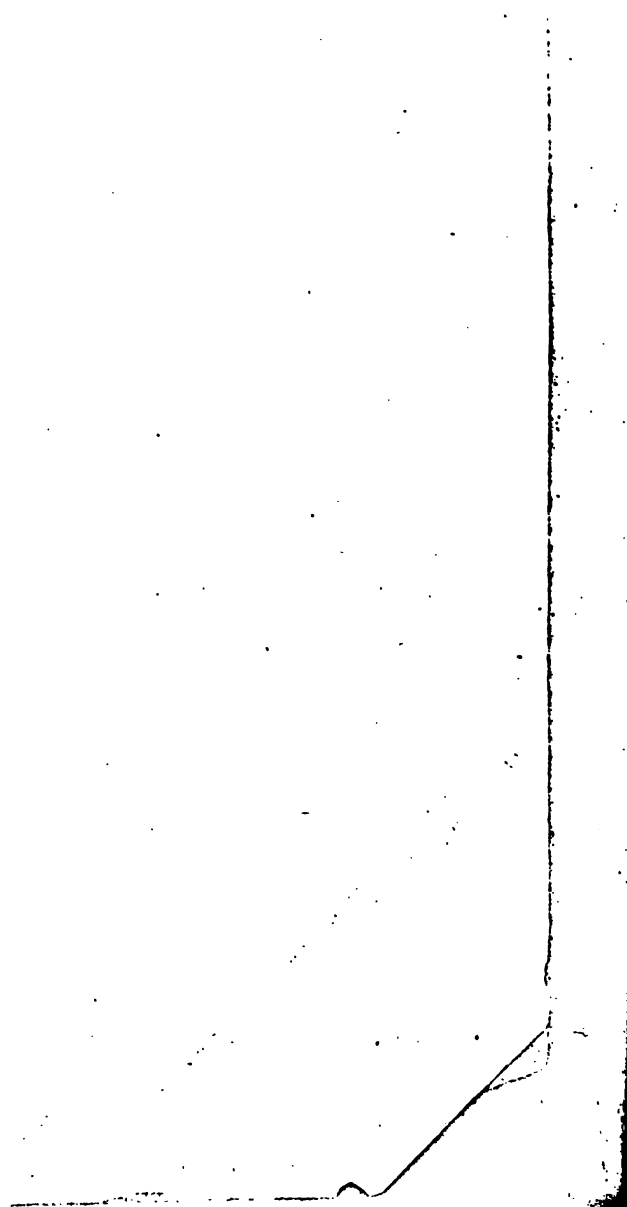
I must confess I have no plan ready prepared, and so exquisitely contrived to avoid offence that, like a mill-wheel with all the cogs shaved off that it may work smoothly, it will impart no movement, and do neither good nor harm. But if there be vitality in the principle I have placed before you—the communion of love and of labour—then that which springs out of it will be vital too, not working like a machine, but bearing fruit like the tree.

And “what would I *do*?” they ask. Nothing more can I do indeed, but that which I am now doing, or rather trying to do, with such small power as God has given me.

I would place before you, this once more, ere I turn to other duties, that most indispensable yet hardly acknowledged truth, that at the core of all social reformation, as a necessary condition of health and permanency in all human institutions, lies the working of the man and the woman together, in mutual trust, love, and reverence.

I would impress it now for the last time on the hearts and the consciences of those who hear me, that there is an essential, eternal law of life, affirmed and developed by the teaching of Christ, which if you do not take into account, your fine social machinery, however ingeniously and plausibly contrived, will at last fall into corruption and ruin. Wherever men and women do not work together helpfully and harmoniously, and in accordance with the domestic relations—wherever there is not THE COMMUNION OF LOVE AND THE COMMUNION OF LABOUR—there must necessarily enter the elements of discord and decay. If men bring their conventionalities and practicabilities into conflict with the natural law of God's divine appointment, we know which must in the end succumb. Meantime I would, if possible, assist in diminishing the duration and the pain of that conflict. If anything I have now spoken carry conviction into the kind hearts around me, help! those who can and will,—and God help us all!





MRS. JAMESON'S WORKS.

A COMMONPLACE-BOOK

OF THOUGHTS, MEMORIES, and FANCIES, Original and Selected.

PART I. *Ethics and Character*; PART II. *Literature and Art*.

The *Second Edition*, revised throughout and corrected. With several Etchings and numerous Wood Engravings. Crown 8vo. 18s.

LEGENDS of the MADONNA,

COMPRISING THE FOLLOWING SUBJECTS:—

I. *Devotional.*

1. The Virgin without the Child;
2. The Virgin and Child.

II. *Historical.*

3. Life of the Virgin from her Birth to her Marriage with Joseph;
4. Life of the Virgin from the Annunciation to the Return from Egypt;
5. Life of the Virgin from the Sojourn in Egypt to the Crucifixion of Our Lord;
6. Life of the Virgin from the Resurrection of Our Lord to the Assumption.

As represented in CHRISTIAN ART: Forming the *THIRD SERIES of Sacred and Legendary Art*. *Second Edition*, corrected and enlarged; with 27 Etchings and 165 Woodcuts. Square crown 8vo. 28s.

LEGENDS of the MONASTIC ORDERS,

As represented in CHRISTIAN ART: Forming the *SECOND SERIES of Sacred and Legendary Art*. *Second Edition*, corrected and enlarged. Comprising

- | | |
|---|--|
| S. Benedict and the Early Benedictines in Italy, Spain, and Flanders; | The Augustines; |
| The Benedictines in England and in Germany; | Orders derived from the Augustine Rules; |
| The Reformed Benedictines; | The Mendicant Orders; |
| Early Royal Saints connected with the Benedictine Order; | The Jesuits; |
| | The Order of the Visitation of S. Mary. |

With 11 Etchings by the Author and 88 Woodcuts. Square crown 8vo. 28s.

LEGENDS of the SAINTS and MARTYRS,

The *Third Edition*, thoroughly revised and improved; containing LEGENDS of

- The Angels and Archangels,
The Evangelists,
The Apostles,
The Doctors of the Church,
S. Mary Magdalene,

- The Patron Saints,
The Warrior Saints of Christendom,
The Martyrs,
The Early Bishops,
The Hermits,

As represented in CHRISTIAN ART: Forming the *FIRST SERIES of Sacred and Legendary Art*. With 17 Etchings and about 180 Woodcuts, several of which are new in this Edition. 2 vols. square crown 8vo. 31s. 6d.

THE HISTORY of OUR LORD,

And of his Precursor S. JOHN the BAPTIST; with the Personages and Typical Subjects of the Old Testament, as represented in CHRISTIAN ART.

Forming the *FOURTH SERIES of Sacred and Legendary Art*, and completing the Work. With numerous Etchings and Wood Engravings. Square crown 8vo. [In preparation.]

SKETCHES in CANADA, and RAMBLES among the RED MEN.

16mo. price 2s. 6d. cloth; or, in Two Parts, 1s. each.

London: LONGMAN, BROWN, and CO., Paternoster Row.

LONDON: PRINTED BY SNOTTISWOODE & CO. NEW-STREET SQUARE.



3 2044 010 161 446



11

